

STOURBRIDGE CHRONICLE



Thursday, December 19, 2013

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What's on

Chance to check festive viewing

Starts Page 23



Let it glow

Community rally to make family dream come true

See Page 11



Sport

Dismay for battling DKs in rugby defeat

See Page 36



Bereaved will face burial fee price rise

BURIAL and cremation fees will rise by up to 15 per cent under plans announced by cash-strapped Dudley Council as it battles to trim millions from its budgets.

Mourners in the borough could face the increase from April, if the proposals are approved.

It comes as the authority battles to save almost £60 million over the next three years.

Bases said today the fees would still remain among the lowest in the Black Country and cash would be used to help with finding more land for burials.

They said every effort has been made to minimise the increases being proposed.

Under the plans, the cost of exclusive right of burial would rise from £1,400 to £1,610 for an earthen grave and from £1,573 to £1,809 for a bricked grave. These are increases of 12 and 15 per cent.

Cremation costs for an adult will increase by seven per cent from £607 to £650. And the cost of having additional chapel time, including an organ and organist, will go up from £118 to £126 per half hour.

The fee for a Woodland grave will go up from £325 to £374.

The proposals are due to be discussed at a meeting on Monday.

Drugs seized in town raid

DRUGS were seized during raids in Dudley town centre on Monday morning.

Around 30 officers swooped on three properties at Northgate House in High Street in Dudley and found a quantity of illegal drugs.

A 49-year-old Dudley man has since been charged with fraud by false representation and was bailed to appear before Dudley magistrates on January 7.

A 47-year-old woman was arrested on suspicion of possessing a class A drug. She has been bailed pending further investigations.

WASTE SITE BOSS ASKS FOR MERCY

Babies goo-goo to the zoo



Delivering presents to Dudley Zoo's reindeer are senior keeper Adam Walker with three-month-old son Sebastian and assistant curator Richard Brown with two-year-old Archie and six-month-old Seth at the Castle Hill attraction

BABY'S first Christmas will definitely be remembered by the families of Seth Brown and Sebastian Walker.

Six-month-old Seth and Sebastian, aged three months, are the sons of two senior keepers at Dudley Zoo and will be spending their first yuletide on site watching their dads prepare Christmas lunch for 1,300 animals!

Assistant curator Richard Brown said: "December 25 means business as usual as the site's rare and exotic animals, which include Sumatran tigers, Bornean orangutans and Santa's reindeer, all needed to be fed and watered.

"Christmas Day is the only day of the

year the zoo is closed to visitors and the only time we really get to spend alone with the animals, so it's quite magical and both Adam and myself want to share that with our babies."

Early

Dads and lads will also include Richard's two-year-old son, Archie, who has promised to open his presents extra early on Christmas morning if he can accompany his father and brother to the zoo.

Festive duties across the zoo's 40-acre site are shared between staff, and those not on the rota call in with a few treats for their favourite charges.

Mr Walker said: "The animals do become extensions of our own families.

"We're lucky to work with some of the rarest animals in the world every single day.

The zoo keeper said: "It's special to spend some extra time with them when the zoo is so quiet before we head home to begin the festivities and tuck into our own Christmas dinners."

He added: "I'm sure we've started a tradition and when our boys are a few years older we will both be bringing them on site with us to deliver their own Christmas presents to the animals."

A WASTE firm boss who failed to meet a court deadline to clear a towering rubbish pile told a judge he had 'tried his utmost' to carry out the work.

Robert McNaughton is facing jail because thousands of tons of waste has not been removed from the site in Brierley Hill.

Mr McNaughton, who owns Refuse Derived Fuel Ltd, was appearing at Birmingham High Court for alleged contempt of court - put forward by the Environment Agency.

The agency brought the matter to court after Mr McNaughton breached an order to clear the site in Moor Street of rubbish by September 10.

Prison

During the hearing, Mr McNaughton also asked to be relieved from a prison sentence which will be activated on Monday, December 23, after he failed to meet orders made by the court to level rubbish at the site.

Mr Justice MacDuff heard estimates from the Environment Agency there was about 13,000 tonnes cubed of waste at the site. It is made up of soil and general biodegradable waste.

But Mr McNaughton said he could no longer comply with the orders to clear rubbish from the site.

The company is £694,000 in debt, with £641,000 owed to himself, he claimed.

Mr McNaughton said: "The September 10 deadline came and passed but I didn't walk away from it, and I didn't walk away from it in 2009."

He added: "I have tried my utmost, I have tried."

"Every penny I get I pushed into it."

But Mr Nicolas Cole, prosecuting on behalf of the Environment Agency, questioned him about his use of a Bentley Continental and Mercedes vehicle.

He claimed they are his father's vehicles.



Robert McNaughton

Mr Cole said: "Given the history of proceedings, this is yet another example at the final moment of seeking another way out."

"In respect of the application, I invite the court to find the contempt proved."

"I take a view that the stage of trying to comply has passed and had passed in June."

"Court orders are there to be obeyed, the authority of the court and use of court proceedings would be obliterated if Mr McNaughton could say he cannot comply because he has no money."

On starting his verdict, Mr Justice MacDuff complained of feeling dizzy and faint.

The case has been adjourned until Monday.

Schools are back on top of the table

SCHOOL staff across Dudley have been thanked by the council's education chief for lifting the borough back to being the top performer in the Black Country.

The borough climbed 12 places to 106 out of 152 local authorities, according to tables released by the Department for Education.

It comes after the decision to record reading and writing results separately for the first time in headline statistics.

In Dudley last year 77 per cent of youngsters managed to achieve level 4 or above in English and maths. This year, 74 per cent of pupils managed at least the same level in all three Rs of reading, writing and maths.

The borough was the only one locally to see its writing marks match those of its pupils managed in reading but fewer pupils managed the same results in maths.

Dudley is second only to Sandwell in the Black Country for the proportion of pupils attending a good or outstanding primary school. The figure is 72 per cent.

Councillor Tim Crumpton, cabinet member for children, libraries and lifelong learning, said: "I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone in Dudley who has contributed to the success of our schools."

■ **Primarys praised - see page 5**

Bus fares to go up by 10p

BUS fares in the West Midlands are going up 10p in the new year, it was confirmed this week.

National Express West Midlands will charge £2.10 for a single fare.

Weekly travel cards are also going up as are Daysaver tickets, although family day tickets are to be frozen as are student passes and some children's passes.

A child's single fare will go up from £1 to £1.05. Fares will also rise on the Midland Metro tram line from January 2.

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NEWS

CONTENTS

Peter Rhodes	4
News Feature	6
Letters	7
Memory Lane	10
Clubs Page	14
Panto Time	22
Festive TV	23 - 27
Property	28 - 29
Motoring	30
Sport	35 - 36

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Tributes to former mayor who was a 'voice for the people'



Alderman Cyril Woodall

AN Honorary Alderman and former Mayor of Dudley with a political career spanning more than 30 years has died. Tributes have been made to former Dudley Councillor Cyril Woodall, 83.

Mr Woodall was mayor of the borough from 1990 to 1991 and was awarded the title of Honorary Alderman for his outstanding services to Dudley in 2006. He was awarded the MBE in 2007 for services to local government.

Councillor David Sparks, leader of the

council, said: "Cyril was a Labour stalwart having devoted his life to his trade union and the party."

Mr Woodall was first elected to the council in 1973 and was one of the founder members of education charity St Thomas' Network. He also served as deputy leader of the council and on the development control committee.

Councillor Shaikat Ali said: "Cyril was a great man and very passionate about St Thomas", and believed in

working to bring about fairness and justice. He was a strong voice for the people. He will be greatly missed."

Current Mayor Councillor Alan Finch, said: "Cyril served this borough and its people extremely well and leaves a very proud history."

Mr Woodall died on December 6. His funeral is at St Thomas' Church, Dudley, today, Thursday, from 1.45pm. The procession will drive past the Council House for people to pay their respects at 2.20pm.

MP will give pay rise to a charity

AN MP has announced he will donate any pay increase he receives to charity.

Ian Austin, for Dudley North, has become the latest MP to make the pledge.

The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) has announced proposals for an 11 per cent rise. It would lift to lift salaries by £7,600 to £74,000 from 2015.

But Mr Austin has spoken out against the proposals and has said he will give the extra cash to organisations in Dudley if the wage rise does go ahead.

Bonkers

"I think this increase is completely bonkers and I won't be accepting it," he said

"I'm from Dudley and being the town's MP is a huge privilege."

"It's a well-paid job but I earned more before I was an MP so I'm not in it for the money. Times are tough for people in Dudley."

"When so many local families are struggling with the cost of living and others are subject to pay restraint, I'll use it to increase my support for good causes and organisations in Dudley."

Quarry plan sound shields for residents

WORK on earth mounds to shield homes from noise from a quarry will be brought forward.

Construction of the bunds were due to take place in two stages – one in 2014 and the other in 2015. But bosses at Kettley Quarry in Kingswinford have now decided to build both next year. They are earmarked for sites near properties in Oregon Close.

It was feared that some residents could have been disturbed twice by the work at different times. A planning application was submitted so that the bunds could be constructed in 25 days, weather permitting, after drainage was installed.

Some residents objected to the scheme being brought forward, saying they would be disturbed earlier.

Chairman of the development control committee Councillor Qadar Zada said: "It's unfortunate that the residents live next to a quarry but the quarry has been there a long time."

Ale's well at Queen's Head



Manager Penny Holloway at the relaunch of Wordsley's Queen's Head as a real ale pub

REAL ale lovers have another stop to add to their itinerary the revamp and re-opening of a traditional pub in Wordsley.

The Queen's Head in High Street has had a refurbishment costing the new owners a five-figure sum.

Brewers Black Country Ales held an opening for the pub last week.

The bar now boasts ten real ales from the brewery's range as well as a selection of lagers and ciders.

"It has always been a good real ale drinkers' pub and we hope to maintain that

tradition with a wide range of different ales that will satisfy every taste," said brewery director Clive Clinton. The 15-year-old pub company already has 30 pubs including two in Birmingham.

The Wordsley pub was bought after being put on the market for £295,000.

Manager Penny Holloway will emphasise the traditional nature of the pub.

Food will also be available.

Plans have also been unveiled by another firm, BS Enterprises, to reopen the landmark Thorns pub in Quarry Bank.

IT started with an offer to tidy her garden for £80-a-day but soon developed into a cruel con trick that financially ruined a single mother caring for a disabled son.

The emotionally fragile 41-year-old, whose son required round-the-clock care, was in danger of being fleeced for up to £67,000 after being targeted and exploited by shameless flower seller Alan Nicholson. The 51-year-old from Birmingham admitted fraud by false representation at Wolverhampton Crown Court. He was jailed for 20 months.

His victim was paying £800 every month to the seemingly respectable Dudley market trader out of £1,100-a-month benefits she received for her 10-year-old.

Gambling

He had befriended her but then took money from her to pay gambling debts – despite having almost £30,000 in the bank and a £180,000 house without a mortgage.

The vulnerable victim, who lives in Dudley, logged the payments in a child's exercise book under the heading 'paying Alan' after being bamboozled into believing she still owed £45,145 to Nicholson, despite having paid around £21,000 for light gardening and decorating jobs he did at her home – later valued at no more than £6,800.

The woman was tricked in to believing it was the result of a massive tax bill she was liable for because she paid cash-in-hand for the jobs.

She calculated that the 'debt' would be paid by February 2016 but Nicholson later admitted it could have continued indefinitely since he was adding hundreds of pounds to the total whenever he hit a losing streak. The paperwork revealed the woman had paid an estimated £21,600 by July 2011 in an 'arrangement' that would have seen him pocket at least £47,000 more by 2016.

His victim finally revealed the situation to a housing



Alan Nicholson – debts

officer but when the official promised to have the matter investigated the woman was too frightened to co-operate. She was terrified of Nicholson, who she knew as a 'white van man named Alan'.

Her revelation was passed to the Adult Safeguarding team at Dudley Council, working with Dudley Trading Standards. An official explained: "This enabled the authorities to act quickly to protect the victim from further financial abuse."

Dudley Trading Standards officers supported by police, arrested Nicholson at his flower stall on July 7, 2011. He was immediately banned from the market.

He had no receipts for any of the alleged work he had done for the woman.

Father-of-three Nicholson, of Kingsbury Road, Erdington, who had no previous convictions, was liked by many. He was said to be ashamed and to be planning to remortgage his home to pay his victim back.

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Public are now asked to keep a cab watch

REVIEWS of taxi drivers and firms could be published online under plans being considered by council bosses.

Proposals to set up a customer feedback scheme in Dudley have been drawn up.

It would allow people to score the service they received and also answer questions on whether the driver was licensed by the council and had the correct signs.

Phone

They would also be to say whether they used a mobile phone while driving or used a taxi meter and whether the fare quoted was the same as the one charged at the end of the journey.

The proposals have been put forward by chairman of the taxi committee Councillor Richard Body. They were being considered by members yesterday.

A report, which will go before councillors, says: "The feedback scheme will put the emphasis on compliance of good driver practice."

"It is suggested that any driver receiving poor customer reviews will alert the taxi base owner that a driver may not be achieving high standards of professionalism which in turn may affect the owner's business."

"This may lead to a higher level of self-policing of poor drivers."

■ Taxi colour U-turn – see page 8

Politician in cycle accident

A BLACK Country MP was knocked unconscious and taken to hospital after coming off his bike.

Ian Austin, who is co-chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Cycling Group, was on his bicycle in Broad Street, Kingswinford, when the accident happened. The 48-year-old MP for Dudley North has no memory of the incident but wants to thank medical staff and the woman who called an ambulance.

He spent about eight hours in the accident and emergency department at Russells Hall Hospital. The father-of-three said: "The nurse asked me if I knew what day or year it was and I couldn't answer properly. Then she asked what I do for a living. When I said I was an MP, I think they thought I really was in trouble."

Crystal Gateway sets standards for care



Dudley Mayor Councillor Alan Finch opens the centre

THE first stage of a £1.6 million project to revamp two day centres to help them better serve the needs of residents with dementia have finished.

Brettell Lane Day Centre in Stourbridge has been refurbished and redecorated to improve the facilities.

It has been turned into a Dementia Gateway by Dudley Council to meet the specific needs of people with dementia. It has been renamed the Crystal Gateway, reflecting the area's links with the glass industry.

The centre now boasts facilities including a relaxing sensory room, themed 1970s and 1980s rooms and a dementia-friendly garden, including a designated circuit walk.

Councillor Dave Branwood, cabinet

member for adult and community services, said: "The facilities that the newly refurbished Crystal gateway has on offer to meet the needs of people with dementia in a very personalised way are fantastic."

Proud

"I am extremely proud that here in Dudley we are leading the way nationally in terms of dementia provision. This has been recognised by government and our dementia gateway service has been held up as a model to follow."

Mayor of Dudley Councillor Alan Finch paid a visit to the centre in Brettell Lane to mark the completion of the work, which cost around £960,000, by

cutting the ribbon at the opening ceremony. He presented Ivy Tomkins, who attends the dementia gateway, with an engraved crystal vase for winning the competition to name the centre.

It is estimated that around 3,850 people in the borough are affected by the condition.

The second stage of the project will start early next year, with the overhaul of the Brett Young Day Centre in Halesowen. The cost of work at the centre in Old Hawne Lane will be £650,000.

The dementia gateways offer a wide range of day sessions and therapies, from crafts and memory exercises to gardening.

Staff also run activities to provide a break for family and carers.

Bottle bombmaker is jailed for three years

New bishop is the youngest



The new Bishop of Dudley, the founder Wendy Fryatt and Jen Coleman during a visit to the Halesowen Food Bank at Little Cornbow Bank in Halesowen during a tour of the area.

Mr Usher, who is married to Rachel, a GP, will be ordained as bishop at St Paul's Cathedral on March 25 before beginning his ministry with the Diocese of Worcester after Easter.

His children are Chad, 13, and Olivia, 11, and he enjoys hill walking, drawing and writing.

He was ordained in 1996 and is currently rector and lecturer at Hexham Abbey, in the Diocese of Newcastle.

Bishop of Worcester, the Rt Rev Dr

A BOMBMAKER from Dudley who made crude explosives using fireworks and gunpowder has been jailed for more than three years.

Police found a vodka bottle containing black powder, tissue paper and a fuse when they searched Liam Hedley's flat in Wolverhampton. The one-litre bottle, which also had three fireworks strapped to it using cable ties, was found in a rucksack at the foot of a bed, the court heard.

Officers also discovered a second device by a television, a glass jar with a fuse and containing a 'low explosive composition' and a compound similar to one found in commercial fireworks.

Reckless

Screws, ball bearings and latex gloves were also found in the bedsit, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told last week.

Ms Sati Ruck, prosecuting, said tests showed both devices were capable of exploding and causing injury.

Mr Malcolm Fowler, defending, said his client had 'a reckless curiosity' but 'little awareness of the potential for harm'.

Hedley, 28, was arrested August 29 over an unrelated matter that did not lead to criminal proceedings.

But while being questioned concerns were raised, triggering the police search at his home.

Hedley pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to two charges of having an illegal explosive substance.

The first related to gunpowder and the other to a low quantity explosive composition.

His pleas were made on the basis that he made both



Liam Hedley – bottle bomb

devices but did not know what he was going to do with them, which was accepted by the prosecution.

Sentencing Hedley, Judge John Warner said: "However one looks at what you did, it remains the fact that you have made, for whatever reason, and kept dangerous items – the existence of which in themselves creates a potential hazard to others."

Hedley was sentenced to three years for each of the charges, to run concurrently, plus two months for breaching a suspended sentence.

NEWS

in brief

Terror suspect is kept in custody

AN unemployed man has been remanded in custody after appearing in court charged with possessing a terrorist publication.

Usman Hussain Choudhary, aged 33, from Terry Road, Dudley, was arrested on Thursday by officers from the West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit.

He faces two charges relating to the distribution of a terrorist publication. He was remanded in custody to appear at London's Old Bailey on December 20.

Town bus lane is to be open to all

A MAIN route through Dudley town centre will be opened up to all traffic for the first time in 12 years as part of regeneration plans.

The proposal to open King Street to through traffic will cost up to £500,000 – but council bosses say it will help both motorists and businesses along the road outside the Churchhill shopping precinct.

At the moment only buses and taxis can use the route.

Fizzog take comic look at the movies

POPULAR Black Country comedy trio Fizzog – Deb Nicholls, Sue Hawkins, and Jacky Fellows, from Stourbridge, Wordsley and Wombourne respectively – have donned wacky outfits for their own calendar based on famous movies – and stripped off for a couple of risqué poses.

In American Beauties, their modesty is protected merely by cabbage leaves, rather than rose petals like in scenes from Oscar-winning American Beauty.

Market closes on four festive days

DUDLEY Market is open Monday to Saturday from 8am to 4pm throughout the festive period but will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, December 27 and New Year's Day. The market will close earlier than normal on December 24 and December 31.

Fresh start at flat

VULNERABLE young people will get the chance to make a fresh start thanks to a makeover for a two-bedroomed flat. A team from insurance brokers Hettle Andrews gave their time to decorate a flat in Wollaston for the Living Springs charity.

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NEWS

THE BEST
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RHODES

SCIENTISTS in China are reported to be developing technology that can make objects seemingly disappear. I can't see that working, can you?

□□□□□□□□

FROM this week's report on plump schoolchildren, we learn that a trustee of the National Obesity Forum is a Mr Fry.

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THE official version of the Mandela story, parroted unquestioningly by the Western media, is that he was adored by all his people and that he created a free and equal South Africa committed to democracy. So why were there tens of thousands of empty seats at the FNB football stadium on Tuesday? And why did the crowd stand and cheer that bloody-handed old land-grabber and vote-rigger, Robert Mugabe? You might easily form the opinion that now the national father-figure with his message of forgiveness and reconciliation has passed on, some South Africans are itching to try Comrade Mugabe's policy of simply grabbing the white man's riches.

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I THOUGHT at the time that the chap doing the deaf sign language at the Mandela memorial ceremony looked a bit worried. Now we learn that Thamsanqa Jantjie's "signing" was gibberish. It makes me wonder how much of the signing we see on British telly is 100 per cent accurate. They do seem to cram an awful lot of words into one or two hand gestures. You know the sort of thing. The newsreader says: "Prime Minister David Cameron and Foreign Secretary William Hague today returned from a five day conference on science and technology in Uzbekistan" and in the corner of your screen, the signer puts up three fingers, touches his nose and tweaks his ear. So which bit of that was "Uzbekistan"?

□□□□□□□□

IF I enter a mosque I remove my shoes. If I go into a synagogue I cover my head with a kippa. When you enter the premises of another faith or culture, it is common courtesy to respect their ways. And when extremist religious speakers enter British universities they should accept the customs of their hosts. But Universities UK seriously suggests that audiences might be segregated, with men and women sitting apart, if a fundamentalist speaker requested it. UUK which bills itself as "the definitive voice for universities in the UK," should be ashamed of itself. Apartheid was demolished in South Africa and segregation was defeated in the States. The idea of reintroducing something similar in British universities to placate some sexually-confused throwbacks who'd be happier living in the 7th century is revolting.

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SO HOW do you deal with an organisation which attempts to sexually segregate an audience on religious grounds? I'm with the emailer who suggests men should whisper earnestly to the stewards: "My religion says I must sit with females."

□□□□□□□□

CHRISTMAS is usually a great time for animal charities to produce photos of their most adorable creatures and rattle the collecting tin. But how on earth can any dog, cat or donkey sanctuary compete against 100 baby seals washed up in last week's tidal surge and now being cared for at the RSPCA's East Winch Wildlife Centre? These pups are the ookey-snookumy sweetest little things you have ever seen, a heart-tugging cross between Bambi and the Little Mermaid, all wide-eyed, shiny-nosed, mewling for bottled milk and trying to suckle the TV camera lens. That's where the Xmas charity cheques will go. Signed, sealed and delivered.

□□□□□□□□

ONE woman plucked pure, heavenly magic from a Celtic harp. Another seemed to be trying to extract a tune from an oven-ready turkey, which turned out to be a primitive bagpipe. I am just back from a thoroughly uplifting evening of medieval music with Joglearesa, a five-piece band performing the sort of music our families enjoyed 20 generations ago. It was the perfect start to yuletide.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Motorist jailed after police find cocaine

A DRUG addict who was found with cocaine with a street value of more than £4,000 after police pulled him over for speeding has been jailed for three years.

Adam Wrench was driving on High Street in Kingswinford on May 15 when he was stopped by police after overtaking vehicles at speed.

Wrench admitted he was driving the Peugeot 407 without the owner's

permission and that he did not have a driving licence.

Mr Mark Rees, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court that the 29-year-old was taken to Brierley Hill police station where a search uncovered 3g of cocaine hidden in his pocket and 42.6g of the drug in his trouser leg.

When his home in Enville Road, Wall Heath, was searched later that

night police found a further 12.4g of cocaine, as well as 43.4g of benzoic acid, an anaesthetic powder often used to dilute cocaine.

Officers also found a stun gun, a small amount of cannabis and an envelope containing £1,685.

Mr Rees said: "The street value of the drugs seized was just over £4,000."

Mr Jonathan Barker, defending,

said Wrench started using cocaine "four or five years ago."

Wrench pleaded guilty to two counts of possession of a Class A drug with intent to supply, one count of possession of a prohibited weapon, one count of possession of a Class B drug and using a car without a licence or third party insurance.

He was sentenced to three years in prison.

Parking plan hits funding problem

PLANS to create extra parking spaces in an effort to stop drivers leaving their cars on a narrow road have hit the skids after a vital funding bid was rejected.

Shoppers using the Arcade in Upper Gornal regularly park their cars along Pale Street, behind the Tesco supermarket, making it difficult for vehicles to pass at busy times.

Residents living along the road have also complained they struggle to get off their own driveways due to the number of cars parked.

Grass

Plans to create new parking spaces off the carriageway by cutting into a small grass bank to the rear of the supermarket had been submitted.

But councillors behind the scheme said they would have to "go back to the drawing board" after a funding bid for the work failed.

Upper Gornal and Woodsetton councillor Kieran Casey said he had been left disappointed by the decision.

"The funding bid was considered by the area housing panel and was rejected on the grounds it was not believed the scheme would be of significant benefit to residents," he explained.

But he said he and other ward representatives were not going to give up on the scheme and were now looking at alternative ways of securing the funding.

"We are talking with officers and seeing where we can go from here," he added.

Boost for charities

STAFF at the Tipton and Coseley Building Society handed cheques totalling £5,600 to two charities.

The Tipton's annual charity golf day raised £3,100, and the society's charitable foundation also donated £2,500. Beacon Centre for the Blind in Sedgley and Compton Hospice in Wolverhampton each received £2,800.

Lee Judson, general manager sales and marketing at The Tipton, said: "We have supported Beacon and Compton for so many years and we will continue to do so to enable them to continue with their valuable work."

Heart attack tragedy ended dream holiday

Hospice opens 17th shop



Maidensbridge Primary School pupils Oliver Coote, Mair Lees, Daniel Coote, Jade Charlton and Sam Pearman with Councillor Pete Lowe, managers Abi Worsey, Paul Robinson and Helen Hobbs and hospice chief executive Stevan Jackson at the opening

THE ribbon has been cut to open the latest shop raising vital funds for Stourbridge's Mary Stevens Hospice.

The store in Albion Parade, Wall Heath, was opened by youngsters from Maidensbridge Primary School. It brings the total number of shops run by the charity to 17.

Money generated by the stores helps the hospice with its work caring for people with conditions including cancer, multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease.

The hospice, in Hagley Road, needs

around £2 million a year to fund care. Managing director of Mary Stevens Hospice Trading Ltd Simon Henwood said: "The trading company has gone from strength to strength with the expansion of its activities in both recycling and the very popular coffee shop in Stourbridge."

"As the need for services continues to grow, we try to keep pace to help ensure the doors stay open, but without the support of our community, who continue to be brilliant, this just wouldn't be the case."

IT WAS to be their dream holiday to celebrate retirement in the Maldives. But the luxury trip turned to tragedy.

A coroner heard that Elizabeth Bastable had been snorkelling on the last day of her trip when she heard commotion from the shore and looked round to see a man being pulled from the water. She spotted the man's vest and partner Paul.

The 63-year-old retired sales manager had collapsed while wading out in waist-high water to fetch an underwater camera from his wife. Despite emergency treatment on the beach, Mr Bastable, of Sandringham Way, Brierley Hill, was pronounced dead 40 minutes later, at 4.40pm on March 24.

Inquest

At an inquest at Dudley Coroners' Court last week, his wife Elizabeth, a retired administrator, said: "It is very, very hard. I have got grandchildren, they are all a big support to me."

Mr Bastable's son Richard, a police officer, described what happened.

He said: "They had been on holiday. It was the Sunday - they had been due to fly back on the Monday."

"They stayed in a water bungalow on a reef. Mother had gone out snorkelling with an underwater camera. Dad had elected to stay at the bungalow and when mother left he was on a sun lounger relaxing."

"Mother had been out snorkelling but she has become aware of a commotion on the beach, in the shallow water."

She saw a man being pulled from the water and recognised the man's vest as her husband's.

Mrs Bastable said: "He was coming out to me to have the camera off me."

It was initially thought he died because of drowning, but during examination, pathologist Dr Sixto Bati-



Tragedy - Paul Bastable

tang found his arteries were severely clogged up due to a condition called atherosclerosis. He also had a history of high blood pressure.

Black Country Coroner Robin Balmain said: "I don't believe your dad drowned. If he had fallen or tripped he would have got back up."

He said he had 'sufficient evidence' from Dr Bati-tang's pathology report to conclude Mr Bastable had suffered a heart attack.

Richard Bastable said: "From our discussions as a family, it was the assumption we made - a potential heart attack."

He said his father was a little overweight and had suffered from stress at work and had received treatment for high blood pressure.

He retired in September last year.

After the hearing Richard Bastable said: "We are very close and this has hurt everyone."

Mr Balmain concluded Mr Bastable died from natural causes.

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Man grew own drugs to use as medicine

A MAN caught growing 35 cannabis plants for his own medicinal use has been spared an immediate jail term.

Sylvester Dennis, who had suffered a stroke and had heart problems, could not afford to buy cannabis so decided to grow his own, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Mr Robert Edwards, prosecuting, said that police attended the Hallchurch Road home of Dennis in Netherpton at 8.10am on September 19 where he was asked whether there was a cannabis in the property, and indicated the rear bedroom.

Police discovered two tents in the room, the smaller tent contained 19 cannabis plants, whilst the larger tent had 16 more substantial plants.

The 53-year-old had pleaded guilty to producing cannabis. Judge Martin Walsh told the court that he would sentence him on the basis that the drug was for his own use.

Dennis was sentenced to 26 weeks in prison suspended for 18 months, and he was ordered to pay an £80 victim surcharge.

Society plan to help first time buyers

THE Tipton and Cosely Building Society has launched a new range of 95 per cent mortgages to help local house hunters buy their first home.

The launch of the two and three-year products means local first time buyers need to raise a deposit of just over £5,500 based on the average price of a home in the West Midlands.

Applications are restricted to properties in B, DY, WS and WV postcode areas and are available to customers who come directly into the society's branches in Sedgley, Cosely, Tipton and Bilston.

Richard Newton, the society's chief executive, said: "We are committed to helping local people buy their own home and understand that first time buyers in particular may need additional support."

The two and three-year variable discounted products offer rates of 4.49 per cent, including a 0.5 per cent discount until December 31, 2015 and 2016 respectively.

Ticket fraudster used internet to con music fans



Matthew Thompson

THEY were promised tickets to see some of the biggest live acts in the world – including Rihanna and Take That – but fans were left disappointed and out of pocket when sold tickets that didn't exist by Dudley conman Matthew Thompson.

They fell victim to a ruse set up by Thompson who used websites such as Ebay and Gumtree to sell fake tickets to events.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that Thompson disguised his identity with pseudonyms and used photographs of tickets taken off the internet to convince people he was genuine.

Mr Timothy Harrington, prosecuting, said that between October 2010 and July 2011 Thompson conned seven people out of nearly £3,000 in total. The first victim had spotted tickets to a Take That

show at Wembley Arena on the auction website Ebay in September 2010. Thompson was selling two tickets for £330. Mr Harrington said: "He invented a story as to why the tickets were going spare, and had given her his phone number."

In December Thompson pretended to be a seller called Ben Adams who was selling VIP tickets to the same Take That show. He used email addresses that matched his pseudonym and the victim transferred £825 for tickets which she believed would be put in the post. They never arrived.

In the same month Thompson sold further tickets for more than £200. When he questioned why they had not turned up, Thompson started to send him 'unpleasant' text messages, the court was told. Between October 2010 and July 2011 he

sold fake tickets to other eager fans. He was caught after a police raid on his home in October 2011 where officers discovered ledgers which had details of his pseudonyms.

Thompson had pleaded guilty to seven counts of fraud by false representation at an earlier hearing. Some customers received a partial refund but due to his lack of assets Thompson was only ordered to pay back £1 under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Mr Gurdeep Garcha, defending, said the 33-year-old from Tudor Vale, Upper Gornal, had no previous convictions and was sorry.

Judge John Warner jailed Thompson for 20 weeks, suspended for two years, and ordered him to complete 200 hours of unpaid work, subjecting him to a curfew for 16 weeks.

Primaries are praised but other schools can do better

MOST pupils in Dudley attend a good or outstanding primary school – but children at secondary schools are not faring as well, a new report revealed today.

Seventy-two per cent of pupils in Dudley go to a good or outstanding primary school, compared to 60 per cent in Walsall, 56 per cent in Wolverhampton and 71 per cent in Staffordshire.

Sandwell has the highest figure in the area at 82 per cent.

But the figures revealed in education watchdog Ofsted's annual report highlight differences when pupils move to secondary school. Only 55 per cent of pupils in Dudley attend good or outstanding secondary schools.

Born

While it's 68 per cent in Staffordshire, 72 per cent in Wolverhampton, 74 per cent in Sandwell and 78 per cent in Walsall. The figures were revealed as Ofsted warned that the story of England's education system is 'a tale of two nations'.

Children from similar backgrounds and of similar abilities can end up with different prospects just because of where they were born and the quality of the school they attended, according to the watchdog's annual report.

The report suggested that there is still a 'patchwork of provision', with some areas performing much better than others.

Scheme to transform town centre

DETAILED designs for a long-awaited multi-million pound revamp of Dudley town centre, transforming the market place, have been lodged.

Council leaders hope the £6.7 million project, due to start next month, will boost the area from the junction with High Street along Castle Street to the top of Castle Hill. There will be 74 stalls created in the new-look market square.

by Heather Large

"There are disadvantaged areas that provide an excellent education and affluent regions that could do much better", the report says.

Overall, the performance of the nation's primary schools has improved, Ofsted found.

Chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw said: "Children from similar backgrounds with similar abilities, but who happen to be born in different regions and attend different schools and colleges, can end up with widely different prospects because of the variable quality of their education."

The Annual Report 2012/13 for the West Midlands as a whole finds secondary school children are served well in the region.

It has the lowest proportion of inadequate secondary schools. The proportion of good or better primary schools has also increased.

Dudley's education boss Councillor Tim Crumpton said: "Our intention is to ensure that, within the next two years, every school in the borough achieves at least a 'good' grading. We are working to help them achieve this."

Santas on bikes for charity



Get in gear for Christmas – members of Stourbug cycling club take part in their annual Santa ride for The Samaritans

SCORES of Santas and elves were on the move – but there was not a reindeer or sleigh in sight.

Father Christmas and his helpers decided to get on their bikes to raise cash for charity The Samaritans.

Around 60 enthusiasts, belonging to a group called Stourbug, donned festive gear for the mass cycle ride from Mary Stevens Park in Heath Lane, Stourbridge. Some even decorated their bikes with tinsel for the festive occasion.

They split into groups based on ability and headed for The Island Pool pub in Cookley by a variety of different routes and sat down for lunch.

The riders had worked up an appetite by covering between 20 and 15 miles depending on which route they had joined.

Collection

Then they all rode the five miles back to the park where it had started from.

Each rider paid a £2 subscription to

take part and took collection tins with them to raise funds for their chosen charity, The Samaritans.

BT phone engineer Andy Glazzard, aged 52, reckons he has ridden 15,000 miles since joining the group three years ago and has shed 3st in the process.

"We try to put something back into the community at the same time as we are enjoying ourselves," he said.

"For instance we had 350 cyclists join us on a ride earlier this year that raised £4,000 for Diabetes UK."

NEWS

in brief

Pharmacy to help with prescriptions

PLANS have been approved for a pharmacy for outpatient prescriptions to be built just outside Russells Hall Hospital.

Bosses say the new £227,000 pharmacy will help to reduce the wait for patients to receive medicines.

Staff will also have more time to help patients understand prescriptions, as well as offer counselling services and there will be a service to deliver specialist medicines direct to homes.

Planning permission for the pharmacy, which is expected to be open from on a daily basis from 9am to 7pm, has been granted by Dudley Council.

Retail firms show interest in store

A LARGE store left empty in Dudley by the closure of a food supermarket has attracted interest from independent and national retail companies.

The Co-op Food store in Fisher Street closed on November 16. Nearly 30 workers at the store lost their jobs due to a decision to close because of 'poor trading performance'. The shop, which is connected to Farmfoods, has received interest. Ben Taylor, from marketing firm Janes England, said: "We have had a couple of enquiries from independent and national companies that are looking to locate in the town."

Waste firm sees permit revoked

A WASTE firm which had been ordered to clear a towering pile of rubbish will no longer be able to operate the site after its environment permit was revoked.

Refuse Derived Fuel Ltd, in Brierley Hill, has already been banned from receiving more waste as it works to clear the backlog.

But now the Environment Agency has removed the company's authorisation to operate the site and served the firm a notice, which says all remaining waste must be moved from the site by February 17.

Summer flights to Cornish resort

BUDGET airline Flybe is launching a new daily service between Birmingham and Newquay in Cornwall as part of its summer 2014 schedule. Flights are available to book now at www.flybe.com for flights from May 16 to September 9 next year.

ADVERTISEMENT

Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people

I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!



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NEWS FEATURE

IN MY VIEW

WITH
MARK
ANDREWS

MOST bizarre story of the last week comes courtesy of Birmingham City Council, which will in future be requiring buskers to go through an audition process before they are allowed to ply their trade outside Snow Hill station.

I can see where the good burghers of Brum are coming from. I once worked in an office where the summer months meant a daily choice between stifling humidity, or opening a window directly above the wailing banshees on the street below. Usually we opted for stifling humidity, air fresheners were cheaper than earplugs.

But since when did local government become a leading authority on musical talent? You can imagine them now, all sat around the committee room table, sucking on their spectacles.

"Councillor Benson, you've got the high-waisted trousers, you can be Simon Cowell. Mr Jackson, you've done a few shifts on hospital radio, you're Louis Walsh."

"Oh, and Betty. You're good with the tea and biscuits, and your old man's a driving instructor, isn't he? Do you fancy being that bird with the funny name?"

"Great, all sorted. So tell us Mr Millichip, why are you here?"

HEARTWARMING tale about the 97-year-old Sid Ratcliffe, who married 90-year-old Iris Law at Wolverhampton Register Office last week.

There are probably cynics around who will say that the age gap is too big, and that Sid was looking for a young trophy wife. But wisely, the couple have been courting since 2001, so they haven't rushed into it.

You know they must have something special when they can bring a smile to the face of even a curmudgeonly old cynic like myself. Can't wait for the golden wedding.

THE report about the maggots at the doctor's surgery in Nottingham is horrifying, but equally I do think we place far too much emphasis on the fabric of buildings when it comes to the NHS.

Years ago, when I went to my GP, it would be in a small, slightly shabby surgery, where you could get an appointment in the evening, and you stood a good chance of seeing the same doctor every time you went.

Then along came a spot of the fabled 'investment', and the old surgery made way for a shiny new mini-clinic with a spacious waiting room, baby-changing facilities, specialist treatment rooms and around 20 staff. Last time I tried to make an appointment I was told it would have to be the following week – and I had no idea who I would see. I think I preferred things the way they were.

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Father Christmas greets Oliver Marple at the Birches Valley grotto in Rugeley



Santa, Lisa Walker and daughter Tahliya, aged two, in the Merry Hill grotto



Betty Green, aged six, meets Santa in his grotto at Sandwell Park Farm



Harry, three and Abigail, nine, Cysters meet Santa at the Victorian Arcade

It's a lotta grotto fun as children enjoy Santa visit

NOTHING says Christmas quite like a trip to Santa's grotto. Excited youngsters flock to see Father Christmas and tell him exactly what they want on the big day.

Increasing numbers of attractions across now offer their own Santa's grottos.

Some, like at Staffordshire's Shugborough Hall, are so popular that tickets to see Santa sell out weeks in advance. Others see queues build up of youngsters eager to pass on their wish lists.

For children, it is often one of the highlights of the festive period.

Some grottos offer youngsters a small memento of their visit, while others give children the chance to have their pictures taken with the man in the red suit.

Shops and department stores first started offering their own grottos more than a century ago.

The tradition of Santa making special appearances at department stores and shopping centres in the run up to Christmas was started by James Edgar who introduced it in 1890 to his Massachusetts department store.

Glimpse

The practice was first seen in Great Britain in 1879 before spreading the following year to Australia and America.

It is believed the first ever department store Christmas grotto was in Liverpool at the Lewis's Bon Marche store, which opened as 'Christmas Fairyland' in 1879.

Today, it is commonplace for department stores to have their own grottos. Set within the 11th century Dudley Castle, a visit to the grotto at the town's zoo also includes a glimpse inside Sleeping Beauty's Palace.

Before meeting Father Christmas, children can look around the castle, which has been transformed with an animal forest, an antique spinning wheel and Princess Beauty asleep in a bed. Visitors are greeted by an elf before being taken into a warm room to meet the big man and receive a special gift.

Following the visit, families can view a glow in the dark puppet show before seeing the zoo's many animals.

Among the visitors so far are pupils and teachers from Lightwoods Primary



Santa in the grotto at Dudley Zoo and Castle with Lightwoods Primary pupils



At the Mander Centre grotto are Shayla-Mai Bratt, aged two, and dad John

School in Oldbury. Reception teacher Sarah Cawtheray said: "I think it is a great grotto for the children to visit and get presents to take home."

Youngsters can sit alongside Santa on a small chair while they make their wishlist, or on request, can sit on his lap to have their pictures taken.

The grotto is open from 10am to 3.30pm every day. Tickets are purchased for 30-minute time slots. For children, it costs £9.50. For adults, it is £6.50.

A family ticket for two adults and two children costs £28.

At Merry Hill, the adventure takes

youngsters on a journey with Elbow the Elf who, with the help of a snowman, makes sure their presents reach them despite the efforts of 'Fumble the Bad Elf'.

Children and their families first go through to a mini cinema, where they don 'magic' glasses to watch a '5D' film of the story – complete with wind, lights and elf dust.

And the children's photographs, taken as they queue, are already included in the film on screen. A photo with Santa himself – and a present – complete the experience. Entry costs £2.50 for adults,

£4.95 per child and £12 for two adults with two children.

The children's fee includes a 50p charity donation to 'Help Harry Help Others'. The grotto is open on Saturdays from 10am to 7pm; Sundays from 10.30am to 5pm; weekdays until December 18 from 10am to 8pm; December 19, 20, 21 and 23 from 10am to 9pm and Christmas Eve from 9am to 5pm.

A wooden chalet-style grotto at Wolverhampton's Mander Centre is nestled on the bottom floor of the shopping centre. Among those who queued to pay him a visit was eight-year-old Blade Wrahton, who said: "Santa was really nice. I give it 10 out of 10."

Santa charges £4.25 for a present, £4 for a photo and £5 for a present and photo.

Set in the picturesque Cannock Chase, this grotto offers an authentic woodland.

Young children are given a Christmas tree sapling to plant as well as a soft toy.

Reindeer can also be found close by, grazing in their forest enclosure.

Reindeer

Angela Marple, who took sons Oliver and Joshua along with husband Nathan said: "We think it is the best grotto in the Midlands. It looks a bit like Lapland without the snow."

Entry costs £6 per child and on Friday from 4pm to 7pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 4pm.

A wintery wonderland of penguins, polar bears and reindeer greet visitors to Santa's grotto at Sandwell Park Farm.

One of the first things children spy is a sleigh, which leads into Santa's workshop where they can meet the man himself and receive a gift.

Entry costs £6 on top of the normal £1.90 admission fee for adults and £1.40 for children. The grotto is open every weekend until December 22 from 10am to 4.30pm. Group bookings are available by calling 0121 553 0220.

Father Christmas sits on a huge gold-coloured chair as he greets children at the Victorian Arcade in Bradford Street, Walsall. An empty unit at the shopping centre has been transformed into a festive wonderland, with decorations and stockings lining the walls.

The Winter Wonderland is located between The Works and Acorns Charity Shop. Entry is £2.50 per child.

THROUGH THE YEARS

1983...

WOLVERHAMPTON Grand Theatre had welcomed 80,000 people through its doors since the three months since it reopened. Chairman of the theatre board Geoffrey Norman said it had helped bring people into the city centre at night, and dispelled the myth that it was a 'no-go' area after dark.

A VICAR scrapped most of the Christmas celebrations at his church in protest at the modern trappings of the festive season. Christ Church in Lye would have no Nativity play or carol service, announced vicar Rev Graham Cooper, instead focusing on special New Year's Day services.

MEANWHILE, Father Christmas nearly failed to turn up for a function at an old people's home in Oldbury because a bus driver left him stranded.

1993...

BRITISH Prime Minister John Major and his fire counterpart Albert Reynolds were on the brink of signing an historic declaration designed to bring peace to Northern Ireland. The agreement would pave the way for Sinn Féin being allowed to take part in talks on the future of Ulster – to the fury of many Unionists.

THREE Britons were freed from prison by Saddam Hussein following the intervention of former prime minister Sir Edward Heath. The men had been given long sentences for illegally entering Iraq, but the British Government insisted no deals had been made to secure their release.

THE threat of fascism hung over Russia after the far-right Liberal Democrats achieved the biggest share of the vote in the parliamentary elections, taking 70 seats.

2003...

DEPOSED Iraqi president Saddam Hussein was finally captured by US forces after eight months on the run. The dishevelled-looking dictator was shown on television, sporting a long, grey beard, but was said to be in good health. Saddam had not been seen since the invasion led by British and American forces in April.

THE jury in the Soham murder trial was sent out to consider its verdict. Ian Huntley, a 29-year-old school caretaker, denied murdering 10-year-olds Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman. His fiancée, Maxine Carr, a 26-year-old classroom assistant, denied conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

VETERAN rocker Mick Jagger was at Buckingham Palace to receive his knighthood – but in the true spirit of rock 'n' roll rebellion, he wore trainers with his lounge suit.



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LETTERS

Ambulance staff call for support

WEST Midlands Ambulance Service staff feel downtrodden, bullied and are treated with no respect by their employers, who are trying to reduce their pay and change working practices to the detriment of staff.

We are the people you call when you are injured or sick. We care about you and for you. Do you care about us? It is clear our employers don't.

Our pay is made up of a basic salary and an uplift for working anti-social hours, essentially nights and weekends. This uplift is up to 25 per cent. This is different to the way the rest of the NHS is paid for anti-social working and is cheaper for our employers. Our employers are currently trying to remove this uplift from our sick pay.

We do have a higher incidence of sickness than other groups of workers, which shouldn't be a surprise as we

come into contact with sick people many times every shift.

Our job can be extremely stressful. This stress is increased by the attitudes of our management. We are now going to be expected to work until we are 67. Do you want a 67-year-old driving an ambulance under emergency conditions or carrying you downstairs on a carry chair?

We drive using blue lights and sirens, putting ourselves at risk, to patient after patient, even though most of them are stable and in no real danger.

During a 12 hour shift I get one 30 minute unpaid break (some get 45 minutes, it depends which area you work in). This can be eight hours into the shift, or even more when busy. I get that break at my base station, the same place I start and finish.

Ambulance staff feel undervalued

and morale is incredibly low. Our management seem to have forgotten that what we do is the reason the service exists and all other areas should be supporting us in delivering excellent care to our patients.

If you want to know how staff feel take a look at www.ambown.freeforums.net

If you think we deserve to be treated fairly contact West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust by going to www.wmas.nhs.uk/Pages/TalkToUs.aspx and filling in the form or write to: Millennium Point, Waterfront Way, Brierley Hill DY5 1LX.

Please help us.

NAME AND ADDRESS SUPPLIED

Gas guzzlers are let off the hook by new move to scrap paper tax disc

I SEE that in his autumn statement the Chancellor George Osborne intends to scrap the paper road tax disc in October next year.

This, he says, has been made possible by the introduction of the ENPR - the electronic number plate recognition system. This innovative new system will enable motorists to pay their road tax by direct debit, very laudable I'm sure.

However, I can't help wondering why he couldn't adopt the far easier option of simply adding the road tax to the price of petrol at the pumps, as has been mooted many times in the past.

Could it possibly be that by doing that, that his wealthy cronies with their gas guzzling Range Rovers, Rollers, Bentleys, Jags, etc, would pay more than the ordinary run of the mill motorist in their small and economical-to-run Fiesta, Micra or Mini?

Perish the thought; surely no self respecting chancellor would take advantage of his position to protect the wealthy at the expense of the less wealthy in our society, would they?

Also, what about the motorists who do not have the means to set up direct debit payments. Not everyone has, or indeed desires to have, a bank account - after all, their credibility has dipped dramatically in recent years.

Of one thing we can rest assured, the treasury's cash cow - hard-pressed motorist - can expect no respite from any chancellor, present or future.

B PARSONS
Millard Road
Coseley

LETTERS to the Editor

POST

Dudley Chronicle, Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

E-MAIL

Dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

England lost MP pay rise - for what?

I ENJOYED reading the Memory Lane article by Daniel Wainwright on December 12. The historic match memento was really interesting.

However, the statement under the centre picture should read: 'Wright and Ferenc Puskas hand over mementoes before England went on to LOSE 6-3.'

It was the first time England had been defeated at Wembley by a foreign team. The return match in Budapest was even more of a disaster, as England were thrashed 7-1.

MR J A HUNT
Dibdale Street
Dudley

ALL my life, as have thousands of others, I have worked for a living.

For most of this time, I have been 'on the clock', and if I did not turn up for work, I did not get paid.

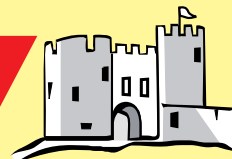
Very interesting to watch politicians whenever cameras are on the 'house'. Where the hell are they? And there are proposals to give them a pay rise! For what?

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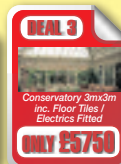
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NEWS

NEWS
in brief**Seven dwarfs get chop from panto**

A TRIO of actors have conquered a numbers problem in their production of Snow White by deleting the roles of the seven dwarfs. Under a storyline adapted by The Funtime Theatre for the classic pantomime, the seven characters have been captured by the Wicked Queen.

"It is the only way we can perform the pantomime with so few people," said actor Rachel Coleman, a former High Arcal School student who set the company up with fellow actor Will Phipps. James Totney will also feature in their panto performance, which takes place at the Wacky Warehouse at the One and Two Halves in Joseph Street, Oldbury on Sunday at 3pm.

Spring tour plan at maternity unit

VISITORS will be given an insight into maternity and neonatal services when bosses at Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust provide a tour of the recently refurbished midwife-led unit.

It takes place on March 13. Places need to be booked on 01384 321124.

Helpline to close for festive period

A SERVICE providing lifts for people needing help to get to medical and dental appointments has announced its festive period closing times.

Hagley Helpline will close its office at 12 noon on tomorrow, reopening on January 2.

Taxi drivers force a U-turn over white car colour rule

TAXI drivers are celebrating a 'landmark victory' after overturning a rule forcing them to use only white-coloured private hire cabs.

Dudley Council brought in the regulation for the single colour scheme to improve safety for residents in 2006 but the move has proved unpopular with the drivers.

They have campaigned against the regulation, claiming the rising cost of white-coloured cars was putting them out of business.

Crooks' cash will help to fight crime

CASH seized from criminals is being ploughed back into the community with more than £91,000 going to groups and initiatives.

The money has been raised through the sale of assets under the Proceeds of Crime Act and is being invested into 15 schemes and organisations in the West Midlands.

Schemes to receive money include a £13,000 retail radio digital upgrade for Dudley town centre and £10,000 for mobile phone bungee cords for distribution by officers at events in Wolverhampton, where there have been reported thefts.

The Haven Refuge has been awarded more than £1,000 to support its youth provision on a Welsh farm estate. A number of other schemes to help youngsters turn away from a life of crime have been supported.

At a meeting of Dudley Council's taxis committee last week, councillors agreed to drop the colour rule. The change, coming into force in June, will also see new signage on side doors to identify the vehicles as taxis.

Safety

Shaz Saleem, chairman of Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association, said: "It is a landmark decision. It has been a tough, long campaign and we are finally there. This is about keeping taxi drivers in business and raising public safety."

Mr Saleem, also managing director at Sedgley-based Beacon Taxis and Express Taxis in Halesowen, added: "Having to be in white cars is expensive for respraying and buying of the cars. The new signage will make it clear for customers on what is a taxi and what is not."

The decision marks a U-turn for the committee, which refused to amend the policy on March 13.

Drivers took part in a go-slow protest through Dudley town centre as part of their campaign.

Hello tiger! Big cats get to nose each other



Male Sumatran tiger Joao, left, and female Daseep meet for the first time at Dudley Zoo, where there are high hopes the pair will mate as there are fewer than 140 Sumatran Tigers survive in the wild

THEY rubbed noses as they said a friendly hello to each other for the first time. It is the start of a budding new relationship for rare Sumatran tigers Daseep and Joao at Dudley Zoo.

Twenty-one-month-old male Joao, who arrived from Krefeld Zoo in Germany last month, has been slowly introduced to three-year-old Daseep at the internal dens over four weeks.

But last week big cat keepers decided the time was right for their first proper meeting and it was a huge success with the tigers keen to get to know one another and explore their new surroundings in the Tecton enclosure.

Keepers hope that if their relationship continues to blossom, they will be hearing the pitter-patter of little paws. Zoo head of media and communica-

tions Jill Hitchman said: "The introduction went like a dream, we couldn't have asked for better. "Since his arrival last month we've monitored Joao very closely and given the two of them plenty of space to get used to each other."

"They both seem very comfortable with each other and are busy exploring the outdoor enclosure and den together."

Drug case judge asks man to show his accounts

A SELF-EMPLOYED businessman found with £1,100 worth of cocaine and a set of scales in his car has been ordered to produce his accounts in court because a district judge suspects he may be a drug dealer.

William Griffin, 26, of Market Street, Kingswinford, admitted having the cocaine, although he has not been charged with supplying the drug.

Rehabilitation

But District Judge Graham Wilkinson said the fact that a set of scales, two mobile phones and the cocaine were found by police in his car in Wordsley at 6.25pm on September 13 led to the conclusion he may be dealing drugs.

The judge also said the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) should be notified that Griffin was taking drugs and should not be behind the wheel of a car.

Mr Dennis Dudley, defending, said: "His house was searched very thoroughly but no drug paraphernalia was found."

Griffin had been attending a drug rehabilitation programme but went back on drugs after being charged with robbery last year.

The case against him had collapsed when the complainant said that a car he was accused of taking had already been stolen, said Mr Dudley.

The judge said he wanted to see Griffin's business accounts before he is sentenced on January 8. Griffin was allowed unconditional bail.

If you need to fill a prescription over the Festive period, the following pharmacies will be dispensing:

Christmas Day - 25.12.13 Open 10:00-14:00 Lloyds Pharmacy 24-28 Dudley Street Sedgley DY3 1SB Tel: 01902 670984	Boxing Day - 26.12.13 Open 09:00-18:00 Boots UK Ltd Unit 3, Merry Hill Centre Brierley Hill, Dudley DY5 1QT Tel: 01384 74177	Open 09:00-18:00 Asda Stores Ltd Merry Hill Centre Brierley Hill, Dudley DY5 1QL Tel: 01384 265001	New Year's Day - 01.01.14 Open 10:00-17:00 Boots UK Ltd Unit 3, Merry Hill Centre Brierley Hill, Dudley DY5 1QT Tel: 01384 74177	Open 10:00-14:00 Lloyds Pharmacy Ltd Brierley Hill Health & Social Care Centre Off Little Cottage Street Brierley Hill, Dudley DY5 1RG Tel: 01384 485085
Open 10:00-14:00 Lloyds Pharmacy Brierley Hill Health & Social Care Centre Off Little Cottage Street Brierley Hill, DY5 1RG Tel: 01384 485085	Open 09:00-18:00 Asda Stores Ltd Pearson Street Brierley Hill Dudley, DY5 3BJ Tel: 01384 571111	Open 10:00-16:00 Boots UK Ltd 25-26 Market Place Dudley DY1 1PJ Tel: 01384 401900	Open 10:00-16:00 Asda Stores Ltd Pearson Street Brierley Hill, Dudley DY5 3BJ Tel: 01384 571111	Open 10:00-16:00 Asda Stores Ltd Merry Hill Centre Brierley Hill, Dudley DY5 1QL Tel: 01384 265001
Open 12:00-15:00 Day Night Pharmacy 45 High Street Lye, Stourbridge DY9 8LQ Tel: 01384 898400	Open 10:00-17:00 Sainsbury's Instore Pharmacy J Sainsbury Store Merry Hill Centre Brierley Hill, Dudley DY5 1QY Tel: 01384 482740	Open 10:00-14:00 Lloyds Pharmacy 24-28 Dudley Street Sedgley, Dudley DY3 1SB Tel: 01902 670984	Open 10:00-17:00 Sainsbury's Instore Pharmacy J Sainsbury Store Merry Hill Centre Brierley Hill, Dudley DY5 1QY Tel: 01384 482740	Open 10:00-14:00 Lloyds Pharmacy 24-28 Dudley Street Sedgley, Dudley DY3 1SB Tel: 01902 670984
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MEMORY LANE



The bus in service when it was running during 1952 in West Bromwich



Empty shell – the vehicle just before its restoration



Gordon Ibbotson who worked on the restoration on the bus with curator Janet Small

It was restoration or bus-t as GEA 174 gets new lease of life

IT HAS been a 20-year labour of love. But for transport enthusiasts, the efforts to restore an old double-decker bus have been worth it.

And now volunteers are ready to hop on board to showcase their work to visitors to the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley.

A £40,000 restoration project has been carried out by members of the transport group at the museum to give the bus a new lease of life.

The team will be proudly relaunching the GEA174 double-decker bus which was originally bought by West Bromwich Corporation in 1952 as part of a fleet of 20 before the local transport system was taken into private hands.

by **Adrew Turton**

The bus was used on the route 74 between Birmingham, West Bromwich and Dudley, but it was withdrawn in 1969.

The vehicle was then donated to Dudley Libraries and was kept stored in the former Midland Red garage in Wolverhampton.

In the museum's early years it was used to collect items – including Emile Doo's chemist from Netherton which now stands proudly on the museum's Canal Street.

Permanently

By 1980 bus GEA 174 had moved permanently to the museum but as a kit broken into parts after a series of unsuccessful restoration attempts.

Now, with funds raised by the group and particularly a bequest from Arthur Whitehouse, and a

team led by Gordon Ibbotson, the bus has been restored to its glory days and is ready to take on a new generation of passengers.

There has been a full engine refurbishment, the brakes have been overhauled, side panels have been replaced along with the flooring and replacement window.

The radiator, which had several holes, has also been repaired and re-chromed and the exhaust has been replaced to get the bus back on the road again.

Janet Small, who is the curator for industry and transport at the museum, said: "Creating the moquette for the seats was a painstaking process but it was all worth it."

"It was made by Holdsworth in Meltham, Derbyshire; the same company that created the leather trimming for the seats, in the same colour used in the Triumph Stag."

Finally, the bus was brush painted and transfers made and applied in-house to give it a finished off look for visitors to enjoy.

The costs were paid for by funds raised by the group and with the support of local companies offering discounts or not charging for small fixings.

The restored bus will now be taken out to a number of shows in the future as well as being used in order to help promote the museum.

Mr Ibbotson added: "It has been a true team effort with members of the Transport Group and many others contributing at each stage of the long restoration."

The restored bus GEA 174 can be seen by visitors to the museum on Transport Group days, usually on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

For more information about the bus and the museum then visit www.bclm.co.uk.



Gordon Ibbotson who worked on the restoration of the 1950s bus



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NEWS

Winter wonderland for Mason



Melodie Williams, 41, has made it a special illuminated Christmas in Rowley Regis for her three-year-old son Mason Williams, who she is holding, and for his siblings Dominic, aged 4, Sadie, 11, and Harmonie Williams, 6

LOVING mother Melodie Williams from Rowley Regis had only one wish this year, to create a winter wonderland that her seriously ill three-year-old son Mason would remember

"They all said they had a wonderful time."

Young Mason was born with a condition commonly known as having 'half a heart' - Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome (HLHS).

Rare

The condition occurs in one out of 4,344 births and expectations are that 70 per cent of those with HLHS will reach adulthood.

Mason also has a rare condition called micro deletion, which means he is missing genes and has a delay in his development.

Mason has already undergone two big operations to 're-plumb' his heart, but due to pressures in his lungs he is currently unable to have the final stage of the procedure.

The family have been told that if his condition does not improve, or he does not continue to grow, within 12 months

he will not be able to have the operation.

His full-time carer mum added: "If he had the operation today he wouldn't survive. We wanted to make this Christmas really memorable for everyone. If Mason can't have his operation, there's a chance he may not be here next year, so it had to be extra special."

"This is the best Christmas present we as a family could have ever asked for."

Friends, families and businesses rallied round to lend their support and make her vision become a reality to delight little Mason.

Despite the fact he is partially-sighted, Mason enjoys lights and it has inspired the idea for the display.

"Mason wasn't very well on the night and couldn't really enjoy it, but we will keep the house lit up for the rest of Christmas for him to enjoy," Mrs Williams added.

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*11am - 2pm Christmas Eve



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Christmas Eve Tuesday 24th December	9am - 5pm
Christmas Day Wednesday 25th December	CLOSED
Boxing Day Thursday 26th December.....	CLOSED
Friday 27th and Saturday 28th December	9am - 6pm
Sunday 29th December.....	10am - 5pm
Monday 30th December.....	9am - 6pm
New Year's Eve Tuesday 31st December	9am - 5pm
New Year's Day Wednesday 1st January 2014	10am - 5pm
Thursday 2nd January onwards.....	normal opening hours

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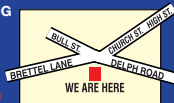
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CLUB NEWS

2014 will start with quiz date

GRANGE 'E' GUILD

GRANGE 'E' Guild held their Christmas party at Grange Court, Prescott Road, Stourbridge on December 3.

Chairman Hazel Smith read the minutes of the previous meeting which were approved and signed.

A warm welcome was given to guests from the Federation, Margaret Tew and Hazel Butt and also to Oldswinford and Norton Guild members.

A hot meal was served with a choice of lasagne or chicken chasseur followed by a selection of desserts all prepared and served by the guild committee.

Following the meal the raffle was drawn and several ladies won prizes.

Entertainment was provided by local husband and wife team, John and Eve Evans and it was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Tea, coffee and a warm mince pie were served during their performance. A vote of thanks was given by the chairman.

Margaret Tew thanked the Grange guild committee and their members for their invitation to a very good evening.

The next meeting will be held at Grange Court on February 4 when guild member Jackie Hill will hold a quiz night.

The guild will be recruiting for new members for 2014/2015. Contact Secretary Jean Williams on 01384 832439.

Auctioneer gives a talk to meeting



Mark Hannam was guest speaker

PENN TOWNSWOMEN

IN November, the Gardening Group visited Hollybush Garden Centre and enjoyed a Christmas lunch with the chance to buy gifts, plants and decorations afterwards.

After the business was conducted, the main speaker was Mark Hannam, from Fielding's Auctioneers in Stourbridge. He had been on "Flog It" on several occasions and as Fielding's holds specialist collection auctions he was involved in the "Michael Jackson" items for sale recently.

Other specialist auctions include Clarice Clift, Moorcroft and Stourbridge glass together with valuable items that may turn up when Mr Hannam values the contents of houses for probate purposes.

Social Studies evening was "A brief History of Telford" or "2,000 years in 60 minutes" by Richard Bifield. It was a most interesting talk.

He said Wellington had had a market for 700 years, Wroxeter near Ironbridge is the largest Roman town to be excavated, Buildwas Abbey dates back to 1200 and Priorslee Hall is another old building. Back-to-back houses were first built in Madeley, while 1709 saw the start of the Industrial Revolution in Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge.

On January 8, Robin Hill will give a talk on the working countryside, while the title of Cas Bailey's January 22 talk is 'If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen'.

Meetings are held at Penn United Community Hall, Penn Road at 7.15pm.

Pennants are exchanged

SANDWELL LIONS

SANDWELL Lions Club has been staging its annual Sleigh Run with the last of the three Saturday events taking place this weekend (December 21).

Santa's sleigh will be leaving St Hubert's primary school at 4.30pm. The exact routes can be viewed on the Sandwell Lions website.

Lions District 105 are donating water filters to the Philippines. A donation of £200 is also to be sent from Sandwell Lions Club.

Sandwell Lions organised a tin shake for the 'Poppy Appeal' and around £700 was raised. A recent dinner/dance in conjunction with Handsworth Lions raised £3,600 to be sent to aid flood victims in India.

Two members who were on holiday in Spain took the opportunity to visit La Cala Lions Club and the two clubs exchanged pennants.

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For both breaks the price includes a theatre ticket, overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel, with full English breakfast (plus dinner for Dine and Dance options). Pick ups offered are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

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*The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details.

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New skills help apprentices prosper

YOUNG apprentices have scooped honours to celebrate gaining new skills on the first step of their new careers.

They were given their chance by Dudley-based engineering firm Beck Prosper Ltd, which hosted the training scheme.

A range of skills in team leadership, customer service and business administration were taught during the course.

College

The students also discovered more about a career in the engineering industry as part of the project.

It was run jointly by Performance Through People training provider, Halesowen College and Lean Engineering and Manufacturing Academy.

Among those who took a star-

ring role was Russell Dean and Verity Lees.

She said: "It was a fantastic opportunity to be able to undertake the Diploma in Customer Service, and we have to give our thanks to our assessor Sue Mills from Performance through People, who was fantastic throughout, we would never have made it without her."

Chris Morris, Training Manager at Beck Prosper, told the apprentices: "I know you are all proud of your qualification achievements, and I know how challenging some of you found them."

"I know from experience how daunting it can be to go back into education but you have done it and this award is a chance for me, your managers and your tutors to reflect their pride in you."



From left to right, back, Russell Dean, Dean Longden, Luke Smith, Managing Director Martin Boulter, Aaron Boffey, Nicole Pemberton, Craig Cooper, Ross Webb, Alan Simpson, Louise McColgan, Laura Underhill, Michaela Samuel, and Verity Lees

Roof firm pair guilty of preying on retired couple

THEY preyed on a retired couple, using aggressive sales tactics to get them to sign up to work costing almost £3,000.

Their victims were pressured to put their signature to paper and told if they did not do so immediately then they would lose a discount totalling thousands of pounds.

The work they offered came with a promise that painting the roof would reduce a loss in heating of up to 40 per cent – but neither the salesman or company boss could prove the figure was correct.

Last week boss Edward Hogan and salesman Stewart Fawke, from Roofguard Protective Coatings Limited, were together found guilty of 12 charges after a trial at Dudley Magistrates' Court.

Coercion

The pair were caught when trading standards officers from Dudley Council turned up at the home of the victims in Halesowen as the company began £2,883 worth of work.

Finding them guilty, Mrs Anne Robinson, chairman of the bench, said: "We find that the sales process as a whole together with the disparity between quoted costs of works a deliberate, well orchestrated course of action designed to exert undue influence, coercion and harassment."

The trial heard how Fawke, aged 46, of Shirley Road, Birmingham, had visited the couple's address and shown a leaflet and DVD which made a claim that the paint could save up to 40 per cent heat loss. He quoted them a price of £5,115. But he then dropped the price to £2,883.

Mrs Robinson said: "The quotation gave misleading and false information designed to induce the customer to sign the contract immediately."

The trial heard how Hogan, 56, of Chapel Street in Derby, was responsible for the leaflet, as owner of the company. In interview, he said he relied on information given by the roof product supplier.

Fawke was found guilty of two charges of fraud by false representation. Hogan was found guilty of two counts aiding and abetting a dishonest failure to disclose information.

The pair were found guilty of three counts of engaging in a commercial practice which is a misleading action containing false information and one count of engaging in a commercial practice which was aggressive.

Both were cleared on one charge of engaging in a commercial practice which is a misleading action containing false information.

The firm, based in Derby, was found guilty of two counts of fraud by false representation, three counts engaging in a commercial practice which is a misleading action containing false information and three counts of engaging in a commercial practice which was aggressive.

The firm had entered a guilty plea on one charge of engaging in a commercial practice which is a misleading action containing false information.

Sentencing is due on February 25.



Roofing company boss Eddie Hogan, left, and salesman Stewart Fawke leaving court in Dudley

Toolmaker to open second factory as 40 jobs are created

A TOOLMAKING and injection moulding company is to open its second factory in Brierley Hill next year with the expansion expected to create 40 new jobs by the end of 2016.

Peartree Lane-based business Petford Tools, which designs and manufactures tools for some of the biggest names in the automotive sector, has purchased a new 3,000 square metre premises in Brierley Hill.

The business was founded in 1970 by chairman Mick Parr, who originally operated from a single unit in Brierley Hill.

Today the business employs 140 staff and has become one of the country's leading independent toolmakers and injection moulders. Managing director Mel Sinar said the new site would help it meet an increase in orders.

Mr Sinar said: "Like any forward thinking business, we have diversified into new markets."

Dudley South MP Chris Kelly visited the company to discuss its expansion and raised the help given to it by the regional growth fund in the Commons.

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NEWS

Festive send-off for two leaders of charity group



A fond farewell – Ron Dalton and Geoff Hill who are retiring from their roles at Age Concern Stourbridge and Halesowen **'THEY will be a very hard act to follow' – that's just one of the tributes given to veterans stepping down from their roles at a charity running day centres for older people.**

Age Concern Stourbridge and Halesowen gave a fond farewell to Ron Dalton, who has been chairman for 20 years, and director Geoff Hill at an event.

Mince pies and mulled wine were served during the festive occasion which was attended by volunteers,

charity users and Stourbridge MP Margot James.

Mr Dalton, 78, said he had enjoyed his time as chairman but said the 'time was right' to make way for someone with fresh ideas to take the good cause into the future. Councillor Ken Turner has now taken over the role.

Devoting

Mr Hill, who owns the electrical superstore in Amblecote High Street and is a well-known charity worker, said he would now be devoting his energies to his own charitable trust.

He became a director of the charity around 10 years ago after working with the Mary Stevens Hospice.

The retirement event tied in with switching-on of the charity's Memory Tree.

Mr Dalton, of Sutton Coldfield, said: "When I first took over as chairman we had £4,000, a couple of old bangers for vehicles and a temporary building. Now we have the Elton Centre."

Councillor Turner said: "They will be a very hard act to follow."

"You can take over from them but you cannot replace them."

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Jerusalem

Galilee and the Dead Sea

Jerusalem and the Holy Land represent an extraordinary collection of both classical and Biblical sites unmatched anywhere in the world.

The ancient city of Caesarea is the first visit where a guided tour is included. Built by King Herod as capital of Roman Judea, it was the biggest port in the Eastern Mediterranean and today has a host of superb remains to explore.

Then it's on to the amazing city of Acre. Explore the beautifully vaulted and huge Knights Halls which are in a state of almost unrivalled preservation and display medieval European military architecture. A stop in Nazareth is then made to visit the great church of the annunciation before continuing on to Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee.

Crossing the Sea of Galilee by boat a visit is made to Capernaum, where Jesus lived, and nearby is Tabgha, the site of the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. Overlooking the whole area is the Mount of Beatitudes, where Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount.

Surrounded by haunting desert scenery is the Dead Sea. Take a dip and bob like a cork – definitely one of life's must-do experiences! Then journey to the spectacular fortress of Masada, the site of one of the ancient Roman's greatest sieges and where the desert climate has preserved the site and the eight Roman encampments surrounding the fortress.

In Jerusalem there's so much to see and experience. Visit the Mount of Olives and the world's oldest continually used cemetery for a panoramic view of the ancient city, punctuated by the beautiful Dome of the Rock where Muhammed rose to heaven.

After touring the Garden of Gethsemane, enter the warren of streets and alleyways that make up the Old City. Visit the Western Wall and walk along the Via Dolorosa before finally arriving at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre built over Golgotha where Jesus was crucified. The decoration here is astounding and contains the final five Stations of the Cross, the church is uniquely shared between the Catholic, Orthodox and Armenian churches.

A visit to the Yad Vashem is where the Holocaust memorial is located and the Shrine of the Book where the Dead Sea Scrolls are displayed.

Finally, arriving in Bethlehem, visit the Church of the Nativity and Shepherd's Fields. It is one of the oldest churches in the Holy Land still in use and marks the site where the Virgin Mary is said to have given birth to Jesus.



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Certain entrance fees payable locally

* varies according to departure date – please go to website for the latest availability and prices

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Victoria Falls

Botswana Safari and Cape Town

Beginning in Zambia, staying close to the spectacular Victoria Falls, the largest single body of falling water in the world, a sunset cruise along the mighty Zambezi on the African Queen will be the first spectacular experience. As the boat glides across this expanse of a river inhabited by hippo and crocodiles, simply relax in a wicker armchair and absorb the unique surroundings.

At Victoria Falls, a guided walking tour is included with other options to view the spectacular falls from either a cruise, a helicopter flight or from a micro-light aircraft.

On the Botswana Safari travel in a specially adapted 10-seater open-sided safari vehicle and see a wide variety of game including monkeys, warthogs and even leopards plus the chance to see cats, giraffe and elephants – it's an experience not to be forgotten so remember to pack a camera!

A second cruise, this time along the Chobe River, almost guarantees sightings of elephant and hippo, then a visit to Cape Point passes the fishing harbour of Hout Bay. Continuing on, see the breathtakingly scenic Chapman's Peak Drive, full of rugged seascapes and cliffs to the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve.

At Cape Point itself see the confluence of the Indian and Atlantic Ocean then it's on to Boulders Beach to see the resident penguin colony.

On the Winelands tour, a visit to the small town of Franschoek is included home to South Africa's most prestigious university and where period buildings and historic streets reinforce the town's dignified atmosphere. A cellar tour and tasting at the award-winning Boschendal Wine Estate is included.

The touring holiday ends in Cape Town. Take time to explore the excellent shopping and dining available, take the cable car to the summit of Table Mountain and, weather permitting, visit Robben Island where Nelson Mandela spent most of his 27 years incarceration.



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REVIEW

It's squeaky fun time with crazy Joe in the Grand's fabulous panto



All of a Muddles for Joe Pasquale as the best friend of the Princess Beauty with Ceri Dupree as Queen Passionella



Curtain call or curtain fall? Joe Pasquale gets in a tangle as Muddles in the Grand's pantomime Sleeping Beauty

Sleeping Beauty, Wolverhampton Grand SLEEPING Beauty ticks all the boxes for panto fun... a beautiful princess, a handsome prince, a king, a queen, a couple of faeries and, best of all, clown prince of comedy Joe Pasquale.

The Grand's 119th birthday could hardly have been celebrated in better style than having the theatre packed with a family audience laughing at the madcap antics of anarchic Joe in a glittering, action-packed pantomime.

Giggles

Make no mistake, Joe as Muddles is the star of the show, merciless in his wind-ups of the other actors as he goes eyeball to eyeball with them to provoke fits of giggles, creating his own turkey-suited superhero and even getting stuck to and elevated by the stage curtain.

There is some plot stuff about him being unable to tell the Princess Beauty that he loves her – the love that dare not squeak its name? – but it's all just an excuse for Pasquale to do what he does so well, being very deaf indeed.

An unfortunate accident with a sharp screw and a revolving chair takes his high voice to chipmunk levels, and he leaves the stage to tease the front row before falling into the orchestra pit. But he is probably at his best reacting to the children brought onto the stage for the inevitable Music Man finale.

It's no one man show though, fine support comes from dazzling Dame Ceri Dupree as Queen Passionella,

sporting increasingly bizarre gowns that not even Lady Gaga could top. My favourite was the one that, rather than just the feathers, appeared to have put an entire ostrich on top of her head, though the glitterball gown was pretty spectacular.

Dupree even came on as Lady Gaga at one point but the impression of Tina Turner was more impressive. And despite Craig Revel-Horwood having dibs on the saying, Dupree made the word 'faaaabulous' her own catchphrase.

Former Coronation Street actress Lucy Evans and Oliver Watton from Hollyoaks, make a pleasant pairing as Princess Beauty and Prince Daniel. Poor Oliver will be a stone heavier by the end of the run if Pasquale keeps stuffing his face with chocolate bars.

Wendy Somerville as evil fairy Carabosse and Michael Peluso as her green-skinned sidekick son Slimeball are very hissable.

Robyn Mellor as the good fairy Enchantress has the best song, Wicked's Defying Gravity, during which Pasquale does indeed defy gravity on a flying motorbike over the heads of audience members in the stalls, on his way to save the princess sent to sleep by pricking her finger on a cursed spinning wheel. It is an impressive effect using similar technology to the flying car in stage versions of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.

Certainly no one in the audience will be sleeping during Sleeping Beauty, not only will the very loud live band keep them awake, so will the gales of laughter sparked by Pasquale's foolery.

Sleeping Beauty continues at the Grand until January 18.

Leon Burakowski



Coronation Street actress Lucy Evans as Princess Beauty in Sleeping Beauty at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre

Now that's what I call a 30th pop anniversary!



Now 86 – 30 years since the first in the pop compilation, taking music from Culture Club to One Direction

FASHIONS and even the medium has changed, from New Edition to 1D, from vinyl and cassette via CD to MP3, but the Now series of compilation albums just go on and on.

This series officially called Now That's What I Call Music! has celebrated 30 years and reached its 86th edition. The format has remained much the same, a jukebox – youngsters, ask your nan – worth of the latest pop hits packed into one package.

Rock fans may sneer that Now compilations are mere throwaway music, an audio Big Mac compared with the more sustaining fare of the serious artist. But that's the point, this is casual consumer pop, packed with quick fixes of fun sounds to make a boring commute pass more quickly – and there's nothing wrong with that provided an alternative is available.

The first Now featured Culture

Club, Phil Collins, Rod Stewart and UB40. Pop has hit back with a vengeance judging by a **Now 86** line-up including Katy Perry, One Direction, Jessie J, Lady Gaga, will.i.am, The Wanted, Lily Allen, James Arthur.

Of course, you can also turn to specialist Now releases. There is **Now That's What I Call Club Hits** which, given the influence of dance music on pop, is similar to the mainstream series as it features Avicii, Jason Derulo, Robin Thicke, Naughty Boy, Rita Ora, Jessie J, and Lady Gaga.

Now That's What I Call Disney features just about every popular song you can think of from Disney movies and **Now That's What I Call Christmas** has 63 festive tunes to soundtrack the big day from turkey stuffing to port-induced headache.

Christmas is the traditional time to hear from Cliff Richard and the origi-

nal Britpop superstar (if you don't count Tommy Steele) is back but minus mistletoe and wine. Cliff has gone to his 1950s roots on his 100th album **The Fabulous Rock 'n' Roll Songbook**. It includes his new song **Fabulous**, which sounds rather like Elvis Presley's **Teddy Bear**, which Cliff also covers. The King himself is represented by **The Nation's Favourite Elvis Songs** album, as chosen on TV.

As for today, Katy Perry roars back into contention as a top pop princess with album **Prism** including her hit **Roar**. But Lady Gaga seems to lose the plot with **Artpop**. She has taken her eye off the (Monster) ball with this lacklustre offering of so-so disco with a smattering of rap. There is a bit of shock but very little awe. If she spent as much time on the music as the outlandish outfits then maybe it would not be such a disappointment. **LB**

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FEATURE

Effects of drink driving could snowball for years

MILLIONS of people risk losing their job or face difficulty getting work if they drink and drive this Christmas, the Government's latest THINK! drink drive campaign claims.

The campaign highlights the snowball effect a drink drive conviction can have on future job prospects.

Up to one million people work in jobs they could lose as a result of a drink-drive conviction, while a survey has shown almost a third (27 per cent) of people would have to give up their job because they rely on a car to get to work.

People who drive as part of their job are particularly vulnerable but someone with a conviction could also be denied access to millions more jobs which are eligible for criminal records checks. These jobs include professional driving jobs, teachers, care workers and jobs in banks and finance.

Convictions

Any employer can ask to see unspent criminal convictions and research shows that three-quarters of employers admit to taking a criminal conviction into account during the recruitment process.

Launching the 'Snowball Effect' drink drive campaign, Transport Minister Robert Goodwill said: "Just one drink can put you over the limit and the consequences are devastating – not only will you be fined and put in a cell, but if you're convicted you will lose your licence and, as this research shows, you could even lose your job."

Edmund King, Automobile Association president, said: "Drink drive convictions have dramatic and traumatic snowball effects. One third of people will lose their jobs and experience years of hiked insurance premiums. If you are going to drive – don't drink. If you are going to drink – don't drive."

Simon Edwards, head of logistics at recruiting firm Manpower, said: "In this highly competitive job market a drink drive conviction puts you at a serious disadvantage."

Don't risk it as the booze flows



During the festive period if you are involved in an incident, you will be breathalysed even if it's not your fault – so don't take the risk

OVER the festive period when meeting with family and friends liberal amounts of alcohol are on offer which makes it much easier to be over the limit should you decide to jump behind the wheel but the Institute of Advanced Motoring (IAM) is advising drivers to avoid it and the consequences which could follow if convicted.

IAM chief examiner Peter Rodger said: "This time of year brings with it brandy pudding, mulled wine and Christmas parties. If you're heading out for a few drinks, make sure you have planned your journey home before you start, so that you don't

drive after a drink." Here are some tips on driving over the Christmas period:

● Don't try and calculate whether or not you have consumed enough to tip you over the drink-drive limit – it's almost impossible to get right

● Drinks poured at home are usually larger than pub measures – don't underestimate how much you've had.

● If you drive to a party and drink when you didn't expect to, don't risk it. Get a taxi or the bus, or arrange for a friend or family member to collect you.

● If you are involved in a road accident you will be breathalysed even if it wasn't your fault – don't risk it, or somebody else's mistake could become your problem.

● A drinking session the night before can easily put you over the limit the following morning. Organise alternative travel plans for the next day.

● If you know someone has been drinking, don't let them give you a lift or drive home.

As well as the danger, the overall cost to an individual is estimated to be £50,000 if you are convicted, through job loss and all the other consequences. Pub measures of wine have got bigger, and drinks have got stronger over the years. Don't be fooled by "one glass is OK" – it may well be too much.

Georgians behaving badly makes interesting reading

Non-Fiction

IN ONE of the most enjoyable history books of the year Vic Gatrell looks at **The First Bohemians (Allen Lane, hardback, £25)**, a rollicking cast of characters who inhabited the salons, brothels and coffee houses of London's Covent Garden in Georgian times.

The sordid and sublime rub shoulders in an area that was part cesspit and part cultural capital, where artists, aristocrats, prostitutes and criminals mixed and many a rake tried to make progress. Gatrell explores an extraordinarily fertile period in British art (maybe it was all that muck on the streets) in a well illustrated work.

For a fuller picture of Georgian London, turn to a lovingly detailed blog-turned-book **Georgian London: Into The Streets** by Lucy Inglis (Viking, hardback, £20), which covers the full 116-year period in which the London we know today began to take shape. Georgian London has some parallels with our own age but in other ways is peculiarly alien. The latter is revealed by did-you-know revelations, such as fresh milk from a cow being milked at the door, or that you could get free entry to the Tower of London menagerie by bringing a dead cat or dog to feed the wild animals.

Pirates, puritans, princes and prophets feature in Adrian Tinniswood's account of one family's involvement in the turmoil of the English Civil War and then the colonial beginnings of America in **The Rainborowes (Jonathan Cape, hardback, £25)**, a fascinating truth-is-stranger-than-fiction story.

What did you do in the war Auntie? Worcester-born novelist and biographer Nicholas Shakespeare never got to ask his Aunt Priscilla that question but a chance find led him on a journey of discovery as he uncovers her story of survival in occupied France in **Priscilla: The Hidden Life of an Englishwoman in Wartime France (Harvill Secker, hardback, £18.99)**. A glamorous, vivacious and morally ambiguous figure is revealed by his research. He had heard rumours that she had fought with the French Resistance during the war but the



A history of sordid and sublime times

truth turns out to be far more complicated.

There is more to publisher Haynes than car manuals. They bring the same eye for detail to a range of subjects. For space buffs, recent titles featuring cut-away diagrams showing technical detail include manuals dedicated to the near catastrophic Apollo 13 Mission, the NASA Mars Rover that landed on the Red Planet last year, the Lunar Rover, the NASA Space Shuttle, and the International Space Station. Hardbacks, prices from £19.99 to £21.99.

Haynes has self-help guides including the **Home DIY Eco-House Manual (hardback, £21.99)** by construction consultant Nigel Griffiths looking at ways to make environmentally friendly improvements to your home. **The Sewing Manual** by Laura Strutt (hardback, £21.99) gives practical advice to those inspired by the vintage boom, Cath Kidston and TV's Great British Sewing Bee to put needle and thread to good use.

Haynes also has a silly side with titles such as the gore-splattered **Zombie Survival Manual (hardback, £16.99)**. If your not-so-little horror is eagerly looking forward to the

zombie apocalypse, then this tongue-in-rotten-cheek guide will help them work out a survival plan. A lighter style of humour is found in **Wallace & Gromit The Complete Cracking Contraption Manual (paperback, £16.99)**. Combining the contents of the previous two hardback volumes dedicated to the genius of Wallace & Gromit, this book contains details of all Aardman animation's wacky creations from the cheese-loving inventor and his long suffering mutt.

Adult Fiction

In **Bridget Jones: Mad About The Boy (Jonathan Cape, hardback, £18.99)** Helen Fielding returns to her iconic hapless heroine a couple of decades since we were last in her company as she battled to keep her beloved Darcy in Edge Of Reason.

The third outing for the character who struck a chord with her accident-prone search for romance in **Bridget Jones' Diary** is, sadly, a disappointment. We learn that Bridget is a singleton again, due to widowhood, so the 51-year-old is looking for love but with the added complication of being a busy mum. It's a bit harsh of Fielding to kill off Mark Darcy just to put Bridget back on square one, especially as the trials of married life and middle age would seem a rich source for humour, it has provided material for many a hit sitcom. Whilst it is funny to see Bridget struggle with social media and other aspects of 21st century life, I am not sure fans will be so keen on Bridget the kooky cougar.

Children's Fiction

Mary Poppins is the world's most famous fictional nanny and her creator P L Travers has been celebrated in recent movie *Saving Mr Banks*, about how Walt Disney pursued her approval to make a film of her book. A timely reissue offers the chance to enjoy the original, less sentimental book (**Harper Collins Children's Books, hardback, £12.99**). Celebrating the 80th anniversary of its publication next year, it remains a magical read, weirder than the film. This is nice edition in pink striped sleeve features Mary Shepard's iconic illustrations. **LB**



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What's On!

Marking 75th year of Rep's festive fun

WITH 75 years of pantomimes and performances under their belt, Oldbury Rep's production of Jack and the Beanstalk promises to be a giant of a family panto.

This production of the well known fairytale has been written by Alan Wood, the group's longest serving member.

The group celebrated its 75th anniversary this year and has performed more than 400 shows over the years.

This is the fifth time the theatre has put on Jack and the Beanstalk since their first production in 1978.

It runs from Friday, January 10, to Saturday, January 18.

Tickets: Adults £10, concessions £9. Call 0121 552 2761 or visit the www.oldburyrep.org website.

It's Mother Goose for Stourbridge

STOURBRIDGE Pantomime Company are once again treading the boards in a seasonal favourite.

The group, which has been going since 1969, will present classic panto Mother Goose at Stourbridge Town Hall following a successful production of Cinderella last year.

In 2011 the group won the best pantomime in the Black Country award at the national Operatic and Dramatic Association West Midlands ceremony.

Mother Goose runs from January 18 to 25. Tickets are adults £13, concessions £9. Call 01384 836963 or see the www.stourbridgepanto.co.uk website.

How to look good in panto

HE'S used to telling us how to look good naked but Gok Wan will swap fashion for panto fun to star in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* at Birmingham Hippodrome.

Joanne is the wicked queen



Joanne Malin plays the villainous Queen Evileene

A TRADITIONAL panto with audience participation returns to The Garrick Theatre with TV newsreader Joanne Malin as Queen Evileene in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

The Lichfield theatre is celebrating 10 years of panto. It is produced completely in-house, with no touring company in sight, and features a professional cast. Children from local dance schools, including Bojangles in the city, and a live band will feature.

The show runs until Sunday, January 5. Tickets cost Adults £22.50 or £20, children £13.50 or £12.50. Contact 01543 412121 or see www.lichfieldgarrick.com

The TV fashion guru plays the Man in the Mirror, and stars alongside *EastEnders* actor John Partridge, who is best known for playing Christian in the BBC soap, as Prince Charming.

The star-studded cast also includes television and film legend Stephanie Beacham, who appeared in *Dynasty*, and who will take to the stage as *The Wicked Queen*.

Song and dance man Gary Wilmot will also star in the show in his first appearance as a panto dame.

Danielle Hope, aged 21, who won the BBC's talent show *Over the Rainbow*, to appear as Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* at the London Palladium will be taking the role of Snow White.

No actual dwarfs will be appearing in the show though, with the magnificent seven being played by physical theatre actors wearing special costumes to make them look small. The production runs from Thursday, December 19, to Sunday, February 2.

Ticket prices range from £12 to £39. For further details contact 0844 338 5000 or visit www.birminghamhippodrome.com



Are you sure about that collar girlfriend? Gok Wan with Stephanie Beacham and John Partridge in costume for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* at Birmingham Hippodrome which opens tonight and continues until February 2

Muddles is to rescue a Princess

WOLVERHAMPTON'S Grand Theatre has launched *Sleeping Beauty* which continues until January 18 starring comedian and former King of the I'm a Celebrity jungle Joe Pasquale as Muddles.

His is joined by former *Coronation Street* star Lucy Evans as Princess Beauty and international cabaret artist Ceri Dupree as Queen Passionella.

A total of 59,000 people went to see last year's show, Jack and the Beanstalk, during its six week run. Bosses at the Lichfield Street theatre say *Sleeping Beauty* is set to be the theatre's most popular panto yet.

It runs until January 18 and tickets range from £16.50 to £26.50. Concessions available. Contact 01902 429212 or see www.grandtheatre.info for further details.

See review - page 22 Dick Whittington turning to Forest

NOW in its fifth year at the Leamore venue, the Forest Arts Centre's panto has become the biggest in Walsall.

The show features professional actors alongside members of Walsall Youth Theatre, which is also based at the Hawbush Road venue.

Dick Whittington runs until this Sunday. Tickets are £6. Call 0845 111 2898 or see www.forestartscentre.co.uk

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CHRISTMAS TV

Matt Smith's last stand as the Doctor

Downton Christmas special

Danny Dyer joins EastEnders

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(18+ only)



For those who prefer to celebrate the festive season in the New Year; Spring Grove House and Tree Tops Pavilion will be hosting 'Party Nights Revisited' in January 2014. Each event includes a sumptuous 3-course meal and disco. It is the ideal occasion to celebrate a delayed seasonal treat or the arrival of the New Year.

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Christmas Eve

BBC 1**Edward is forced to make a confession in Holby City, 8.00pm**

6.00 Breakfast 9.00 The Gruffalo (R) 9.30 A CBeebies Christmas Carol Adaptation of the Charles Dickens novel. 10.10 Sarah & Duck: Christmas Special 10.20 FILM: The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause (2006) Christmas fantasy comedy sequel, starring Tim Allen. ★★ 11.45 Only Fools and Horses Part two of two. The Trotters arrive in America. (R) 1.10 BBC News 1.20 Regional News; Weather. 1.30 FILM: The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (2005) Four children discover a secret entrance to a mystical land that an evil witch has cursed with perpetual winter. Fantasy adventure, starring Tilda Swinton and Georgie Henley. ★★

BBC 2**Jo Brand Phill Jupitus and Brendan O'Carroll feature in QI XL, 9.00pm**

6.00 This Is BBC 2 6.50 Natural World: Animal House (R) 7.50 FILM: Herbie Rides Again (1974) Disney comedy sequel, starring Helen Hayes. ★★ 9.15 Westminster Abbey The choir prepares to sing at a papal Mass in St Peter's Basilica, Rome. (R) 10.15 FILM: An American in Paris (1951) Romantic musical, starring Gene Kelly and Leslie Caron. ★★ 12.05 FILM: Splash! (1984) Romantic fantasy comedy, with Tom Hanks and Daryl Hannah. ★★ 1.50 FILM: Guys and Dolls (1955) A gambler tries to win the heart of a Salvation Army member, while his friend searches for somewhere to hold an illegal dice game. Musical, with Frank Sinatra and Marlon Brando. ★★

ITV**Priya tells David to call off the wedding in Emmerdale, 7.00pm**

6.00 Daybreak 8.30 Lorraine 9.25 FILM: The Christmas Takeover (1998) A cold-hearted toy tycoon goes to the North Pole to drive Santa out of business, only to have a crisis of conscience. Comedy drama, starring Harry Hamlin and William Hootkins. ★★ 11.30 Catchphrase Revival of the game show, hosted by Stephen Mulhern. (R) 12.15 ITV News and Weather 12.30 Let's Do Christmas with Gino & Mel With singer Billy Ocean. Last in the series. 1.30 Steppin' Out with Katherine Jenkins A cabaret show with the classical singer and celebrity guests. (R) 2.45 Gary Barlow: Journey to Afghanistan The X Factor judge performs a concert for British troops at Camp Bastion. (R)

Ch4**Chris O'Dowd, The IT Crowd Special: The Internet Is Coming, 9.00pm**

6.20 Wilde Stories Animated version of The Selfish Giant. (R) 6.50 Wilde Stories (R) 7.15 The Bear Animation based on the Raymond Briggs tale. (R) 7.45 FILM: The Nativity Story (2006) Biblical drama, starring Keisha Castle-Hughes. ★★ 9.45 The Big Bang Theory Army and Penny use Bernadette to spy on Leonard and Priya. (R) 10.15 The Big Bang Theory (R) 10.40 The Simpsons The family spends Christmas on a ranch. (R) 11.10 The Simpsons (R) 11.40 The Simpsons (R) 12.10 Deal or No Deal: Ideal Christmas Noel Edmonds hosts a festive-themed edition. 1.10 FILM: It's a Wonderful Life (1946) Fantasy drama, starring James Stewart. (b/w) ★★

Ch5**Ashley Maddocks, Eddie Stobart: 12 Days of Christmas, 8.00pm**

6.00 Milkshake! 10.00 Chinese Food in Minutes Oriental cooking. (R) 10.05 The Dog Rescuers A Grimspy inspector finds two puppies locked in a dirty bathroom. (R) 10.40 World's Strongest Man 2013: Qualifiers James Richardson presents action from the Giants Live Series event in Norway, which was the fourth qualifier for the World's Strongest Man heats. (R) 11.40 Eddie Stobart's Christmas Cracker The truckers deliver a consignment of reindeer for a Christmas parade. (R) 12.40 FILM: Clash of the Titans (1981) A hero of ancient Greece journeys into the underworld to save a princess from being sacrificed to a sea monster. Mythical adventure, starring Harry Hamlin and Laurence Olivier. ★★

Early View**Prime Time****Late View**

3.40 Toy Story 2 (1999) Animated sequel, with the voice of Tom Hanks. ★★

5.10 Shrek the Halls Festive animated short, starring the lovable ogre. (R)

5.35 BBC News 5.50 Midlands Today; Weather.

5.55 Finding Nemo (2003) Animated adventure, with the voices of Albert Brooks and Ellen DeGeneres. ★★

7.30 EastEnders A defiant David resists Janine's plea to drop his blackmail plan, and Joey is optimistic as Alice's hearing arrives. Alfie and Kat bid an emotional farewell to the Queen Vic.

8.00 Holby City Edward is forced to make a confession about Mary-Claire, Zosia is determined not to let her father back into her life, and Mo tries to pluck up the courage to ask Mr Thompson out.

9.00 Last Tango in Halifax Gillian worries about the fallout from her confession and Kate is rushed to hospital. Caroline's emotions are in turmoil as Celia and Alan's wedding day dawns. Last in the series.

10.00 Not Going Out Christmas Special Lee invites Lucy and her parents to join him and Daisy to spend Christmas in a cosy old country house that used to belong to his aunt - but they soon sense a spooky presence.

10.45 Outnumbered Christmas special from 2012. The Brockmans throw a party, but Karen is too busy chatting online, Jake has fallen in with a bad crowd and the less said about the guests the better. (R) National Lottery Update

11.30 BBC News; Weather.

11.45 Westminster Abbey: The First Eucharist of Christmas Live service from Westminster Abbey in London, led by the Very Rev John Hall. Carols include: O Come, All Ye Faithful, Hark! The Herald Angels Sing and O Little Town of Bethlehem.

1.05 FILM: Protocol (1984) Comedy, with Goldie Hawn and Chris Sarandon. ★★ 2.35 Weatherview 2.40 BBC News

4.15 Fantasia (1940) Premiere. Animated anthology, set to famous pieces of classical music. ★★

6.15 Carols from King's Music and readings from the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge, including the carols Once in Royal David's City, O Little Town of Bethlehem and God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen.

7.30 The Perfect Morecambe & Wise Christmas Special A selection of classic clips from the duo's festive BBC specials, including Angela Rippon coming out from behind the news desk and Andre Previn being shown how to play Grieg.

8.00 Victoria Wood's Midlife Christmas A festive special from 2009 that attempts to cram a night's Christmas viewing into an hour. Highlights include the Midlife Olympics 2009, popular costume drama Lark Pies to Cranchesterford and the adventures of soap star Bo Beaumont. (R)

9.00 QI XL Stephen Fry hosts a festive edition of the comedy quiz, with Jo Brand, Phill Jupitus, Brendan O'Carroll and Alan Davies answering questions on the theme of Kris Kringle.

9.45 Mel Smith: I've Sort of Done Things A celebration of the life and career of the actor, writer and director, who died in July at the age of 60. With contributions by Griff Rhys Jones, John Lloyd and Richard Curtis.

10.45 Comedy Connections The story of how Mel Smith and Griff Rhys Jones collaborated to create one of the most successful and influential partnerships in comedy history. (R)

11.25 The Awakening (2011) An investigator of supernatural hoaxes has her sceptical beliefs challenged when she is summoned to a haunting at a boarding school. Horror, starring Rebecca Hall and Dominic West. ★★

1.05 FILM: The Spiral Staircase (1945) Period thriller, starring Dorothy McGuire. (b/w) ★★ 2.30 This Is BBC 2

3.45 Fast Freddie, the Widow and Me Drama, starring Laurence Fox and Sarah Smart. (R)

5.15 The Nation's Favourite Christmas Song A countdown of the top 20 festive tunes. (R)

6.45 ITV News and Weather 7.00 Emmerdale An emotional Priya tells David she wants him to call off the wedding and be a proper family with her and the baby. Megan packs her bags to leave after Declan lashes out again.

7.30 You've Been Framed! At Christmas Harry Hill narrates a festive and comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, featuring a kid wrestling a Christmas tree and the world's most terrifying present.

8.00 Midsomer Murders New series. Return of the long-running detective drama, starring Neil Dudgeon. It's a time of joy and happiness in Midsomer for once - Christmas is coming, and DCI Barnaby and his wife Sarah (Fiona Dolman) are soon to become parents. But the festive mood changes when a man is stabbed to death with an antique sword during a ghost-hunting party at a spooky manor house in Morton Shallows. Is blacksmith's daughter Rose Wilton seeking revenge from beyond the grave, or will Barnaby and new sidekick DS Charlie Nelson (Gwilym Lee) find a more earthly motive behind the murder?

10.00 ITV News at Ten and Weather 10.15 Christmas Carols on ITV Aled Jones presents an evening of festive performances from St Michael the Archangel Church in the village of Kirby Malham, North Yorkshire.

11.15 Couples Retreat (2009) Four couples sign up for relationship therapy on a tropical island, but the treatment only serves to drive them apart. Comedy, starring Vince Vaughn, Malin Akerman and Jon Favreau. ★★

1.15 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA 2.00 ITV Nightscreen 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show (R)

3.50 The Grinch (2000) Fantasy comedy, starring Jim Carrey. ★★

6.00 The Simpsons Featuring a parody of Michael Bay's Transformers. (R)

6.25 Hollyoaks Grace urges Trevor to push ahead with his malicious plans for Mercedes.

6.55 Channel 4 News 7.00 4thought.tv How Christmas is perceived by those who do not celebrate it.

7.05 Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas Festive spin-off of the animated films. Sid the sloth tries to redeem himself after accidentally ruining one of Manny the mammoth's Christmas traditions. (R)

7.30 The Snowman and the Snowdog Animated sequel to classic festive tale The Snowman, in which a boy's snowman and snowdog magically come to life and take him on an adventure to the North Pole. (R)

8.05 Big Fat Gypsy Weddings: Carols and Caravans Following the Christmas celebrations of the travelling community, including an escape to the sun in Tenerife, a festive 18th birthday party and a spectacular winter wedding. (R)

9.00 The IT Crowd Special: The Internet Is Coming Roy and Jen's reputations are put at risk in the final episode when an incident involving spilt coffee and a homeless person ends up on the internet. Comedy, starring Chris O'Dowd. Part of The IT Crowd Night. (R)

10.00 The IT Crowd Manual Behind the scenes of the comedy.

11.05 The IT Crowd: The Fans' Favourite Episode A people's choice episode. (R)

11.35 The IT Crowd: The Writer's Favourite Episode Graham Lineham's favourite chapter for the gang. (R)

12.10 The Inbetweeners (R) 12.40 The Inbetweeners (R) 1.10 The Inbetweeners (R) 1.35 The Inbetweeners (R) 2.05 FILM: Idiocracy (2006) ★★ 3.25 90210 4.05 Suburgatory 4.30 Suburgatory 4.50 Suburgatory 5.15 A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun (R)

3.00 Dirty Rotten Scoundrels (1988) Comedy, starring Michael Caine and Steve Martin. ★★

5.10 Scrooge: A Christmas Carol (1951) A hard-hearted skintiff is taught the error of his ways by a succession of spectral visitors. Adaptation of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, with Alastair Sim and Mervyn Johns. ★★

7.00 Eddie Stobart: 12 Days of Christmas A compilation of the most memorable festive moments from the series following the haulage company, featuring workers battling the elements, the traffic and the Christmas rush. 5 News Update

8.00 The Muppets and Lady Gaga at Christmas The pop superstar joins forces with the furry gang of puppets for an entertainment extravaganza, performing seasonal favourites and her own hits. She sings duets with Kermit the Frog, musician Elton John, actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt and drag artist RuPaul, while Forgetting Sarah Marshall star Kristen Bell appears in a sketch alongside the Muppets and Lady Gaga. (R) 5 News at 9

9.10 Greatest Ever Christmas Movies Countdown of the best festive films, from White Christmas and It's a Wonderful Life to Bad Santa and Elf. Gremlins star Zach Galligan and Miracle on 34th Street's Mara Wilson talk about their experiences making their movies, while Aled Jones reveals that he hadn't even seen classic animation The Snowman until 10 years ago - despite having a hit in 1985 with a version of its famous song Walking in the Air. Featuring contributions by Ollie Locke, Stacey Solomon, Joe Swash and Eamonn Holmes.

12.05 Britain's Craziest Christmas Lights (R) 1.05 SuperCasino 3.05 Blackpool Lights 3.55 House Doctor (R) 4.20 House Doctor (R) 4.45 Great Artists (R) 5.10 Nick's Quest (R) 5.35 Wildlife SOS (R)

Christmas Day

BBC 1



Michael McIntyre's Showtime, from the O2 in London, 10.05pm

6.00 Breakfast Headlines and business news. 9.00 *The Gruffalo's Child* Animated sequel, with the voice of Robbie Coltrane. (R) 9.25 *The Madagascar Penguins in a Christmas Caper* (R) 9.40 *Old Jack's Boat: The Christmas Quest* Jack's search for three Christmas gifts. 10.00 *Christmas Day: Live from Westminster Abbey* Traditional morning service. 11.00 *FILM: Chicken Run* (2000) Animated comedy, with the voices of Mel Gibson and Julia Sawalha. *** 12.20 *BBC News: Weather*. 12.30 *FILM: The Princess and the Frog* (2009) Disney animated musical fantasy, with the voice of Anika Noni Rose. *** 2.00 *Top of the Pops Christmas* The year's most successful chart acts.

BBC 2



Actor Mark Gatiss presents MR James: Ghost Writer, 10.05pm

6.00 *This Is BBC 2* 6.20 *Natural World: The Real Jungle Book* Bear India's sloth bear, the inspiration for *The Jungle Book's* Baloo. (R) 7.20 *FILM: Herbie Goes Bananas* (1980) Disney adventure, starring Cloris Leachman. *** 8.50 *FILM: The Red Shoes* (1948) Oscar-winning drama, with Moira Shearer. **** 11.00 *Carols from King's* Music and readings from the Chapel of King's College, Cambridge. (R) 12.15 *Music of the Monarchy* with David Starkey A selection of full-length royal classics. 1.20 *Swingin' Christmas* Festive music by the John Wilson Orchestra. (R) 2.45 *The Perfect Mince Pie* & *Wise Christmas Special* A selection of classic clips from the duo's festive BBC specials. (R)

ITV



Nick flies into a rage and slaps Leanne in Coronation Street, 7.30pm

6.00 *CITV: Babar and the Adventures of Badou*. (R) 6.10 *Dino Dan* (R) 6.25 *Dino Dan* (R) 6.40 *Sooty* (R) 6.50 *Bookaboo* (R) 7.05 *Horrid Henry* (R) 7.20 *Almost Naked Animals* (R) 7.40 *Almost Naked Animals* (R) 7.55 *Bottom Knockers* 8.10 *Bottom Knockers* 8.25 *Dinner Date* (R) 9.25 *FILM: Santa Claus: The Movie* (1985) Family fantasy adventure, starring Dudley Moore. *** 11.25 *The Chase: Celebrity Special* (R) 12.30 *The Big Christmas Reunion* (R) 1.30 *You've Been Framed!* At Christmas (R) 2.00 *River Deep Mountain High: James Nesbitt in New Zealand* James Nesbitt travels from the tip of the North Island down to the South.

CH4



David Dickinson, Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special, 9.30pm

6.10 *Ivor the Invisible* (R) 6.35 *Prep & Landing* (R) 7.00 *Famous Fred* (R) 7.25 *Little Wolf's Book of Badness* (R) 7.55 *Olive, the Other Reindeer* (R) 8.50 *FILM: James and the Giant Peach* (1996) *** 10.25 *FILM: Horton Hears a Who!* (2008) *** 12.05 *The Big Bang Theory* Bernadette receives her PhD. (R) 12.35 *The Big Bang Theory* Sheldon re-evaluates the time he spends with Amy. 1.05 *The Simpsons* Homer plays Santa. (R) 1.40 *The Snowman* Animated adventure, based on Raymond Briggs' festive tale. (R) 2.10 *The Snowman and the Snowdog* Animated sequel to classic festive tale *The Snowman*. (R) 2.45 *The Simpsons* Bart destroys the family's Christmas presents. (R)

CH5



Noddy Holder narrates Britain's Craziest Christmas Lights, 7.30pm

6.00 *Milkshake!* 8.05 *FILM: Scrooge* (1970) A miserly man is taught the error of his ways by a host of spectral visitors. Musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, starring Albert Finney and Alec Guinness. *** 10.15 *FILM: Gone with the Wind* (1939) A plantation heiress has a tumultuous relationship with a roughish Southern gentleman during the American Civil War. Epic romantic drama, starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable. **** 2.35 *FILM: Casablanca* (1942) The owner of a Moroccan nightclub is reunited with an old flame who needs his help to escape the country. Romantic drama, starring Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman and Claude Rains. (b/w) ***

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

3.00 *The Queen*
3.10 *BBC News: Weather*
3.20 *Toy Story 3* (2010) Premiere. Animated adventure, with the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen. ****
5.00 *Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special* Six *Strictly* newcomers compete.
6.15 *Call the Midwife: Christmas Special* Preparations for Shelagh's wedding are rudely interrupted by the discovery of an unexploded bomb, forcing the residents to pull together as they are evacuated to safety.
7.30 *Doctor Who* Matt Smith makes his final appearance as the Doctor, who joins some of the universe's deadliest alien species drawn to a mysterious message emanating from a backwater planet.
8.30 *EastEnders* Bianca is put out when Nikki arrives at her house on Christmas Day, while David and Carol get closer - but Janine looks set to ruin things.
9.30 *Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special* The first of two festive editions. Mrs Brown tries to find out what her grandson wants for Christmas and loses her temper at the family games night when no one plays by her rules.
10.05 *Michael McIntyre's Showtime* Stand-up comedy performed at the O2 in London during his 10-night run in 2012, featuring stories about a horrific trip to the dentist and watching his wife get undressed.
11.05 *BBC News: Weather*
11.20 *On Christmas Night* Actor Patrice Naiambana reads from the Gospel of St Matthew, followed by the Sussex Carol performed by the Choir of King's College, Cambridge.
11.25 *The Vicar of Dibley* The villagers celebrate Christmas, and vicar Geraldine learns there is a heavy price to be paid for festive kindness when she agrees to attend three slap-up lunches. (R) National Lottery Update
12.10 *Would I Lie to You? At Christmas* (R) 12.40 *FILM: Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy* (2004) *** 2.15 *Weatherview* 2.20 *BBC News*

3.15 *Doctor Who at the Proms* Highlights of the 2013 concert featuring music from the sci-fi series. (R)
4.30 *An Adventure in Space and Time* Drama about the creation of *Doctor Who*, starring David Bradley. (R)
6.00 *Sign Zone: The Queen* Her Majesty's annual address to the nation and the Commonwealth. (R)
6.10 *Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty* A performance of Tchaikovsky's ballet by the New Adventures dance company, reimagined by Matthew Bourne as a supernatural love story featuring vampires, fairies and gothic opulence.
7.40 *Christmas Night with the Two Ronnies* The comedy duo perform songs and sketches in a Christmas special from 1987, featuring a guest appearance by Charlton Heston and music by Elton John. (R)
8.30 *Morecambe & Wise: Leading Ladies* Penelope Keith presents a compilation of highlights from the comedy duo's shows featuring appearances by female stars of stage and screen.
9.30 *The Tractate Middoth* Terrifying spirits are summoned to a library after two men search for an obscure Hebrew text. Mark Gatiss's adaptation of MR James's tale, starring Sacha Dhawan and John Castle.
10.05 *MR James: Ghost Writer* Actor and writer Mark Gatiss examines the life and career of author MR James, attempting to uncover the inspirations behind his stories of the supernatural.
11.05 *QI* Stephen Fry presents a festive special from 2010, as Daniel Radcliffe, Graham Norton, Lee Mack and regular Alan Davies answer questions on the theme of hocus pocus. (R)
11.50 *Hebburn* Sarah flies in to Hebburn for Christmas from Switzerland with Jack, and her parents and miserable grandmother head up north too. Last in the series. (R)
12.20 *FILM: Dead Poets Society* (1989) *** 2.25 *This Is BBC 2*

3.00 *The Queen Her Majesty's* annual address.
3.10 *ITV News and Weather*
3.20 *Tangled* (2010) Disney animated comedy, with the voice of Mandy Moore. ***
5.15 *Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs at Christmas* The comedian helps out at Battersea Dogs & Cats Home over the festive period.
6.15 *Emmerdale* Hour-long episode. Alicia and David's wedding day arrives and everything seems to be going wrong, while Charity catches a drunken Declan pouring petrol around his house.
7.15 *ITV News and Weather*
7.30 *Coronation Street* Hour-long episode. Nick flies into a rage and slaps Leanne, Roy's hopes for a quiet Christmas with Hayley are dashed, and Carla makes Peter an equal partner in Underworld.
8.30 *Downton Abbey* It's summer and as part of Rose's debutante 'coming out' she is to be presented at Buckingham Palace. The family is in London, preparing Grantham House for the busy social programme, and Martha Levinson, not one to miss such a grand occasion, arrives from New York with Cora's recently disgraced brother Harold (Sideways star Paul Giamatti). Both outspoken and larger than life, they make quite an impression on certain members of high society. Meanwhile, when the Crawleys are implicated in a scandal that threatens to engulf the monarchy, Robert goes to great lengths to protect the royal family - and his own. Last in the series.
10.30 *ITV News and Weather*
10.45 *Love Actually* (2003) Interlinked tales of several people in search of love. Richard Curtis's romantic comedy, with Hugh Grant, Martine McCutcheon, Emma Thompson, Colin Firth, Bill Nighy and Liam Neeson. ***
1.10 *Christmas Carols on ITV* (R) 2.10 *FILM: Closing the Ring* (2007) Drama, starring Shirley Maclaine. *** 4.05 *ITV Nightscreen*

3.15 *Deal or No Deal: Ideal Christmas* Noel Edmonds hosts a festive-themed edition.
4.15 *The Alternative Christmas Message* Another famous face delivers an alternative to the Queen's speech.
4.20 *Channel 4 News*
4.30 *4thout.tv* How Christmas is perceived by those who do not celebrate it.
4.35 *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992) Puppet comedy, starring Michael Caine. ***
6.15 *Home Alone 2: Lost in New York* (1992) A boy ends up stranded in the Big Apple - where he bumps into two familiar burglars with an axe to grind. Comedy sequel, starring Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern. ***
8.30 *Bear's Wild Weekend with Stephen Fry* Bear Grylls takes the 'Ol' host' on an expedition to the Italian Dolomites, setting him a series of challenges, from travelling on the skids of a helicopter to descending a waterfall.
9.30 *Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special* The comedian hosts a show filled with festive fun and frolics, joined by Russell Brand, Davina McCall and David Dickinson. Little Mix perform their new single. Last in the series.
10.35 *Man Down Christmas* Special Scrooge 3000 - a festive school play set in space - and a terrifying yuletide tradition are just two of the Christmas challenges that risk reducing Dan's life to a crumbling mess.
11.05 *Father Ted Christmas Special* Father Ted and Dougal endure their worst Christmas ever when they get lost in a lingerie department, leaving them in a highly embarrassing predicament. Festive edition from 1996. (R)
12.15 *Father Ted* (R) 12.50 *Father Ted* (R) 1.20 *Father Ted* (R) 1.45 *Father Ted* (R) 2.15 *Father Ted* (R) 2.40 *Father Ted* (R) 3.05 *FILM: A Matter of Life and Death* (1946) *** 4.50 90210 5.30 *Suburgatory* 5.55 *Prep & Landing: Naughty v Nice* (R)

4.40 *Greatest Ever Christmas Movies* Countdown of the best festive films, from It's a Wonderful Life to Bad Santa. Featuring contributions by Gremlins star Zach Galligan and Miracle on 34th Street's Mara Wilson. (R)
7.30 *Britain's Craziest Christmas Lights* Former *Slade* frontman Noddy Holder narrates a documentary following four households as they turn their homes into electric winter wonderlands with festive illuminations. For these Christmas obsessives, who include Dave and Carol Edwards, putting up the lights involves a head for heights, DIY wiring skills and an unshakable resolve, with some inspired by the bling of Blackpool while others aim for the ambitious scale of a West End show. (R)
8.30 *Eddie Stobart: 12 Days of Christmas* A compilation of the most memorable festive moments from the series following the day-to-day work of the haulage company that has road, rail and air divisions. The programme features 12 of the best tales of the firm's employees as they battle the elements, the traffic and the crazy Christmas rush to make sure their deliveries are on time. (R)
9.30 *Michael Jackson's This Is It* (2009) Premiere. Documentary following the singer rehearsing for his planned 50 shows at London's O2, before his death in June 2009. Featuring interviews with Jackson and performances of classic hits including *Billy Jean* and *Wanna Be Startin' Something*. ***
11.40 *Greatest Christmas TV Moments* Countdown of 50 festive TV highlights, featuring Gavin & Stacey, Morecambe and Wise, Only Fools and Horses, Wallace and Gromit, Doctor Who, Top of the Pops and The Royle Family. (R)
2.35 *SuperCasino* 3.55 *House Doctor* (R) 4.20 *House Doctor* (R) 4.45 *Great Artists* (R) 5.10 *Nick's Quest* (R) 5.35 *Wildlife SOS* (R)

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Saturday 28th December - 9 am-6 pm
Sunday 29th December 10.30 am-4.30 pm
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Boxing Day

BBC 1



**Landlord Mick makes his
presence felt in
EastEnders, 7.15pm**

6.00 Breakfast Headlines and business news. 9.00 Room on the Broom (R) 9.25 Mouse and Mole at Christmas Time Snowmole takes Mouse to a land where all of his wishes come true. 9.55 FILM: 101. Dalmatians (1996) Disney comedy adventure remake, starring Glenn Close. *** 11.30 FILM: Flushed Away (2006) Animated adventure, featuring the voice of Hugh Jackman. *** 12.50 BBC News 1.00 Regional News; Weather. 1.05 FILM: Wallace & Gromit in The Curse of the Were-Rabbit (2005) Oscar-winning animated adventure, with the voice of Peter Sallis. *** 2.25 FILM: Alice in Wonderland (2010) Fantasy adventure, starring Mia Wasikowska. ***

BBC 2



**Ben Fogle, Ben & James
Versus the Arabian
Desert on at 9.15pm**

6.00 This Is BBC 2 Preview of upcoming programmes. 6.05 Natural World The devastating power of the African driver ant. (R) 6.50 FILM: Herbie Goes to Monte Carlo (1977) Disney comedy adventure sequel, starring Dean Jones. *** 8.35 Westminster Abbey The new intake of pupils talk about their lives at the choir school. Last in the series. (R) 9.35 Earthflight Bird's-eye view of the natural world. (R) 10.35 Pride & Prejudice: Having a Ball A team of experts recreates a Regency ball. (R) 12.05 FILM: Emma (1996) Jane Austen drama, starring Gwyneth Paltrow and Ewan McGregor. *** 2.00 Operation Snow Tiger Part one of two. Scientists studying endangered Siberian tigers. (R)

ITV



**Keith Lemon hosts
Through the Christmas
Keyhole, 11.20pm**

6.00 CITY: Babar and the Adventures of Badou. (R) 6.10 Dino Dan (R) 6.25 Dino Dan (R) 6.40 Sooty (R) 6.50 Bookaboo 7.05 Horrid Henry (R) 7.20 Almost Naked Animals (R) 7.55 Bottom Knockers Street 8.10 Bottom Knockers Street 8.25 Dinner Date David from Essex chooses three blind dates from five potential partners. Narrated by Charlotte Hudson. 9.25 FILM: Problem Child (1990) Comedy, starring John Ritter. *** 11.00 FILM: The Flintstones (1994) Live-action version of the cartoon comedy, with John Goodman. *** 12.05 ITV News and Weather 1.05 FILM: Casper (1995) Family comedy starring Christina Ricci. ***

CH4



**Come Dine with Me:
Comedians Christmas
Special, 4.35pm**

6.15 FILM: Mysterious Island (1961) Sci-fi adventure, starring Michael Craig. *** 8.00 Morning Line A look ahead to today's meeting at Kempton Park. 9.00 Frasier Part two of two. Niles is suspected of being an accomplice to murder. (R) 9.30 Frasier Lilith and Frasier are set up on a blind date. (R) 10.00 The Big Bang Theory Howard gets caught in a strange argument. (R) 10.30 FILM: The King and I (1956) Oscar-winning musical, starring Yul Brynner and Deborah Kerr. *** 1.05 Channel 4 Racing Clare Balding and Nick Luck present live coverage of five races from Kempton Park and Wetherby, including the 3.10 King George VI Chase.

CH5



**Laurence Shalaei,
World's Strongest Man
2013 on at 8.15pm**

6.00 Milkshake! 9.45 World's Strongest Man 2013: Qualifiers (R) 10.45 Eddie Stobart: 12 Days of Christmas The haulage company's most memorable festive moments. (R) 11.45 World's Most Pampere Pets Documentary about people who spoil their pets. 12.45 FILM: High Society (1956) Complications arise when a playboy composer tries to stop his ex-wife from marrying another man. Romantic musical comedy, starring Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. *** 2.55 FILM: Meet Me in St Louis (1944) A close-knit family is worried that a prospective move to New York will mean missing out on the 1904 World's Fair. Musical, starring Judy Garland, Tom Drake and Margaret O'Brien. ***

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

4.05 Cars 2 (2011) Premiere. Animated adventure sequel, with the voice of Owen Wilson. ***

5.45 BBC News Today; Weather.

6.05 Gangsta Granny Family comedy based on David Walliams' book about a law-breaking OAP who takes her bored grandson on a crime spree. Julia McKenzie, Joanna Lumley and Rob Brydon star.

7.15 EastEnders Phil is in for a surprise when new Vic landlord Mick makes his presence felt. Max finds Lauren and Jake together and Joey gets bad news from the prison.

7.45 Still Open All Hours David Jason returns as Granville in this one-off special of Roy Clarke's popular comedy, now running the shop with his son after inheriting the business from Arkwright.

8.15 Death Comes to Pemberley New series. Anna Maxwell Martin, Matthew Rhys and Jenna Coleman star in this sequel to Pride and Prejudice, adapted from the best-selling novel by PD James, which brings Jane Austen's world back to life in a highly original way - with a murder mystery plot at its centre. Continues tomorrow.

9.20 Len Goodman's Perfect Christmas Strictly Come Dancing judge Len Goodman takes a trip through the TV archives, choosing a series of small-screen clips to demonstrate his idea of the perfect Christmas Day.

10.00 BBC News

10.15 Regional News; Weather.

10.25 Match of the Day Gary Lineker introduces highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Manchester City v Liverpool and Hull City v Manchester United.

11.55 Have I Got a Bit More 2013: News for You Extended highlights from this year's editions, revisiting how Paul Merton, Ian Hislop and a variety of guests took on the big news stories of 2013. Last in the series.

12.40 Skiing Weatherview 12.45 BBC News

3.00 Operation Snow Tiger Part two of two. Liz Bonnin searches for a tiger that has gone missing. (R)

4.00 Final Score A round-up of this afternoon's football results.

5.15 You Have Been Watching - David Croft A tribute to the TV comedy writer. (R)

6.15 Dad's Army (1971) The Home Guard soldiers are put on their mettle as they get ready to capture three German aviators. British comedy based on the TV series, starring Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier. ***

7.45 Christmas University Challenge Alumni from the colleges of Gonville & Caius, Cambridge, and Christ Church, Oxford, compete, with Andrew Graham-Dixon and Michael Dobbs among the contestants.

8.15 Idris Elba - King of Speed Part one of two. Documentary in which the Luther star embarks on an international journey to explore the history of car racing while sampling the thrill of competition vehicles.

9.15 Ben & James Versus the Arabian Desert Part one of two. Four years after On Thin Ice - their Antarctic expedition for BBC Two - James Cracknell and Ben Fogle reunite to attempt an unguided crossing of a portion of the Rub' al Khali desert - also known as the Empty Quarter. The duo are following in the footsteps of British explorer Wilfred Thesiger, who travelled extensively in the region between 1945 and 1949 and earned the nickname of Mubarak bin London from the Bedouin tribes.

10.15 King Arthur (2004) A Roman commander in fifth-century Britain comes to realise his true destiny is to lead the people against Saxon invaders. Adventure, starring Clive Owen and Keira Knightley. ***

12.10 FILM: Dracula (1958) Hammer horror, starring Christopher Lee. *** 1.30 FILM: Sign Zone: Jane Eyre (2011) Period drama, starring Mia Wasikowska. *** 3.20 This Is BBC 2

3.00 Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1 - Behind the Magic Ben Shephard interviews the stars of the film. (R)

4.00 Off Their Rockers A pensioner's wheelchair is stolen. Last in the series. (R)

4.30 The Nation's Favourite Elvis Song A countdown of the King's 20 greatest hits, as voted for by the public, featuring contributions by stars he influenced and an interview with his ex-wife Priscilla Presley. (R)

6.00 ITV News and Weather

6.15 Emmerdale Hour-long episode. At Home Farm, the fire is raging and Charity tries to get Declan to leave. Eventually, they flee the grounds, but Megan rushes inside - and becomes trapped.

7.15 Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1 (2010) Premiere. The dark lord Voldemort rises to ultimate power over the magical world, so the teenage wizard and his friends set out on a mission to find the magical horcruxes - artefacts containing parts of the evil wizard's soul that hold the key to destroying him. The first half of the two-part conclusion to the fantasy saga, starring Daniel Radcliffe, Ralph Fiennes, Emma Watson and Rupert Grint. ***

10.05 Am Britney Jean: Britney Spears in Las Vegas Documentary following the pop star as she prepares for her performance residency in Las Vegas, revealing how she handles the pressures that come with the next chapter of her career.

11.05 ITV News and Weather 11.20 Through the Christmas Keyhole Keith Lemon returns with a festive rummage through the homes of three mystery celebrities, challenging regular panellist Dave Berry and guests to guess their identities. (R)

12.20 FILM: The Affair of the Necklace (2001) Period drama, starring Hilary Swank. *** 2.20 FILM: Inland Empire (2006) Mystery drama, starring Laura Dern. *** 5.20 ITV Nightscreen

3.35 Deal or No Deal: Ideal Christmas Noel Edmonds hosts a festive-themed edition.

4.35 Come Dine with Me: Comedians Christmas Special Sean Hughes, Gina Yashere, Paul Tonkinson and Duncan Norvelle compete. (R)

5.35 Hollyoaks The Roscoes have more than one reason to celebrate as Christmas Day arrives. Fraser worries when Grace goes missing, and plans are put into action to steal Mercedes' new fortune.

6.05 Channel 4 News

6.15 4thought.tv How Christmas is perceived by those who do not celebrate it.

6.20 Independence Day (1996) A fleet of huge flying saucers launches a devastating and unprovoked attack on Earth. As survivors try to flee the seemingly unstoppable alien invaders, the courageous US president, an ace pilot and a computer genius come up with a plan to take the fight to the enemy and save the human race. Roland Emmerich's sci-fi adventure, starring Will Smith, Bill Pullman, Jeff Goldblum, Mary McDonnell, Randy Quaid and Harry Connick Jr. ***

9.00 Big Fat Quiz of the Year 2013 Jimmy Carr poses questions about the major events of the year to Jack Whitehall, Jonathan Ross, Dara O Briain, Kristen Schaal, Noel Fielding and Richard Ayode.

11.05 Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special The comedian hosts a show filled with festive fun and frolics, joined by actor and comedian Russell Brand, presenters Davina McCall and David Dickinson, and girl group Little Mix, who perform their new single Little Mix. Last in the series. (R)

12.10 FILM: Machete (2010) Action thriller, starring Danny Trejo. *** 2.00 FILM: Legend (1985) Fantasy adventure, with Tom Cruise. *** 3.35 A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun (R) 4.35 Secret Removers 5.30 Suburgatory 5.55 Suburgatory

5.15 The Wizard of Oz (1939) A tornado whisks a girl off to a magical land where she embarks on a journey in search of the wizard who knows the way home. Musical fantasy, with Judy Garland and Ray Bolger. ***

7.15 Michael Buble's Christmas Special The Grammy-winning Canadian crooner performs classic festive songs in his third annual Christmas special, with soul and R'n'B singer Mary J Blige joining him on numbers including Run, Run Rudolph.

8.15 World's Strongest Man 2013 James Richardson presents action from the opening heat from Haitang Bay in Sanya, China, where the top two of six competitors would progress to the final. Britain's Strongest Man Laurence Shalaei was among those involved, along with American duo Robert Oberst and Nick Best, with disciplines including the Truck Pull and the Atlas Stones.

9.15 Britain's Favourite Christmas Songs A countdown of popular songs that are guaranteed to make any Christmas party go with a swing. Highlights include the Jackson 5's Santa Claus Is Coming to Town, Greg Lake's I Believe in Father Christmas, the Waitresses' Christmas Wrapping and the Pogues and Kirsty MacColl's Fairytale of New York. Is Mud's Lonely Christmas past its sell-by date? Will Jona Lewie ever Stop the Cavalry? And where would any Christmas party be without Slade and their classic anthem Merry Xmas Everybody? But which one will top the nation's festive chart? Featuring contributions by artists, producers, video directors, composers and journalists, who shed light on the creation of the songs and their accompanying videos. (R) 12.10 Michael Buble's Christmas Special (R) 1.10 SuperCasino 3.05 Blackpool Lights 3.55 House Doctor (R) 4.20 House Doctor (R) 4.45 Great Artists (R) 5.10 Nick's Quest (R) 5.35 Wildlife SOS (R)

Friday 27 December

BBC 1



Mick lets Shirley and Tina move into the Vic in EastEnders, 8.00pm

6.00 Breakfast 8.20 Match of the Day (R) 9.50 FILM: 102 Dalmatians (2000) Disney family adventure sequel, starring Glenn Close. ★★
11.25 FILM: Bedtime Stories (2008) Fantasy comedy, starring Adam Sandler. ★★
1.00 BBC News: Weather. 1.15 Regional News: Weather. 1.25 Open All Hours: A Celebration The enduring appeal of the classic comedy. **1.55 Len Goodman's Perfect Christmas** Festive TV clips chosen by the Strictly judge. (R) **2.35 FILM: Enchanted (2007)** A fairy-tale princess is magically transported from her cartoon world to modern-day New York. Part-animated fantasy comedy, starring Amy Adams, James Marsden and Susan Sarandon. ★★

BBC 2



David Attenborough explores the continent's wildlife in Africa, 9.30am

6.00 This Is BBC 2 6.30 Natural World: Tiger Dynasty (R) 7.30 Sign Zone: Great Continental Railway Journeys (R) 8.30 Sign Zone: Africa 2013: Countdown to the Rains The rains finally arrive and the grazing animals spread out across the valley. Last in the series. (R) **9.30 Africa** David Attenborough explores the continent's wildlife and landscape. (R) **10.30 Earthflight (R) 11.30 FILM: War and Peace (1956)** Historical drama, starring Audrey Hepburn. ★★
2.50 FILM: How the West Was Won (1962) Three generations of a pioneer family experience many ordeals as they try to build a life for themselves on the American frontier. Epic Western, starring James Stewart and John Wayne. ★★

ITV



Harry Hill narrates You've Been Framed! shown at 8.00pm

6.00 CITYV: Babar and the Adventures of Badou (R) 6.10 Dino Dan (R) 6.25 Dino Dan (R) 6.40 Sooty (R) 6.50 Bookaboo 7.05 Horrid Henry (R) 7.20 Almost Naked Animals (R) 7.40 Almost Naked Animals (R) 7.55 Bottom Knockout Street 8.10 Bottom Knockout Street 8.25 Dinner Date Russell from Essex takes part in the dating show. (R) **9.25 Murder, She Wrote A ventriloquist is accused of murder. (R) **10.25 Dickinson's Real Deal (R) 11.25 FILM: Batteries Not Included (1987)** Sci-fi fantasy, starring Jessica Hahn. ★★
1.25 ITV News and Weather 1.35 ITV News Central: Weather. 1.40 FILM: Step Up (2006) Musical romance, with Channing Tatum and Jenna Dewan. ★★**

CH4



Noel Edmonds hosts Deal or No Deal: Ideal Christmas, 3.15pm

6.15 Suburgatory 6.40 According to Jim (R) 7.05 According to Jim (R) 7.30 Will & Grace (R) 7.55 Will & Grace (R) 8.20 FILM: A Turtle's Tale: Sammy's Adventures (2010) Premiere. Animated adventure, with the voice of Dominic Cooper. ★★
10.00 The Big Bang Theory Penny considers breaking up with Leonard. (R) **10.30 The Big Bang Theory** Sheldon hires an attractive female assistant. (R) **10.55 The Simpsons** Homer wakes up to find his family missing. (R) **11.25 The Simpsons** Mayor Quimby brings election day forward. (R) **11.55 FILM: Aliens in the Attic (2009)** Children's sci-fi comedy, starring Carter Jenkins. ★★
1.35 FILM: Dr Dolittle (1998) Comedy, starring Eddie Murphy. ★★

CH5



The hapless hero bags a bargain in Do It Yourself Mr Bean, 9.30pm

6.00 Milkshake! 10.00 World's Strongest Man 2013 The opening heat from Haitang Bay in Sanya, China. (R) **11.00 Eddie Stobart's Christmas Cracker** The truckers deliver a consignment of reindeer for a Christmas parade. (R) **12.00 FILM: 633 Squadron (1964)** RAF pilots are sent to bomb a German rocket-fuel plant, but the capture of a resistance fighter threatens the plan. Second World War drama, with Cliff Robertson and George Chakiris. ★★
1.50 FILM: Zulu Dawn (1979) Fact-based historical drama, charting events leading to the massacre of more than 1,500 British soldiers at Isandlwana. Prequel to Zulu, starring Burt Lancaster and Peter O'Toole. Edited for violence and language. ★★

Early View

Prime Time

Late View

4.10 Megamind (2010) Premiere. Animated superhero comedy, with the voice of Will Ferrell. ★★

5.40 BBC News: Weather. 5.55 Midlands Today: Weather.

6.05 Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (2008) The globe-trotting archaeologist races against Soviet agents to find a mysterious artefact of untold power. Action adventure sequel, starring Harrison Ford and Cate Blanchett. ★★

8.00 EastEnders Linda is livid with Mick for letting his sisters move into the Vic, and bonds with Sharon over their mutual dislike of Shirley. Peter finds the money Cindy stole from Phil.

8.30 Miranda The shop owner's friends accuse her of being immature so she sets out to prove them wrong – first by looking after a toddler, then by hosting a grown-up dinner party. (R)

9.00 Death Comes to Pemberley Darcy retreats into a version of his younger self as the fallout from Wickham's arrest threatens his marriage, and Louisa Bidwell's unforeseen revelation adds to his wife's anxiety. Concludes tomorrow.

10.00 BBC News: Weather; National Lottery Update

10.20 Mrs Brown's Boys Christmas Special The first of two festive editions. Mrs Brown tries to find out what her grandson wants for Christmas and loses her temper at the family games night when no one plays by her rules. (R)

11.00 Not Going Out Christmas Special Lee and the gang spend Christmas in a spooky country house. (R)

11.45 John Bishop's Christmas Show Festive giggles featuring Jason Manford, Nina Conti, David O'Doherty and Tim Vine. (R)

12.45 FILM: The Lonely Guy (1984) Comedy, with Steve Martin and Charles Grodin. ★★ **2.10 Weatherview 2.15 BBC News**

5.15 Flog It! From National Museum Cardiff. (R)

6.00 Celebrity Eggheads Derek Jacobi, Frances Barber, Neil Dudgeon, Fiona Laird and Emma Fielding take on the general-knowledge champions. Hosted by Dermot Mulrighan. (R)

6.30 The Choir: Sing While You Work The three remaining choirs face their biggest challenge as they perform a song composed by Paul Mealer at Ely Cathedral, before one is picked as the winner. Last in the series. (R)

7.30 Christmas University Challenge Distinguished graduates of St Hugh's College, Oxford, compete with those of the University of Stirling, with Suzy Klein and Paul Lewis among the contestants.

8.00 Idris Elba - King of Speed Part two of two. The Luther star examines the importance of precision driving skills in motorsports, learning the art of rallying from former world champion Ari Vatanen.

9.00 Ben & James Versus the Arabian Desert Part two of two. James Cracknell and Ben Fogle continue their expedition across the Arabian Desert. As they try to pick up the pace, disaster strikes when one of them suffers a serious injury, leading to further delays – although it does allow them to reflect on their friendship.

10.00 Cast Away (2000) A manager for a courier service has to fend for himself when a plane crash leaves him stranded alone on a desert island. Initially panic-stricken, he overcomes his terror to survive for four years on his own before building a raft and setting off on an epic journey back home. Adventure drama, starring Tom Hanks. Helen Hunt, Nick Searcy, Lari White and Chris Noth. ★★

12.15 Ambassadors (R) 1.15 FILM: The Mummy (1999) Hammer horror, starring Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. ★★ **2.40 Sign Zone: Imagine - Who's Afraid of Machiavelli? (R) 3.40 Sign Zone: Waiting for Gaga: A Culture Show Special (R) 4.40 This Is BBC 2**

3.45 The Chase With Lorraine Kelly, Craig Charles, Jamelia and Dom Joly.

4.45 Downton Abbey The Crawleys are implicated in a scandal that threatens to engulf the royal family. Last in the series. (R)

6.35 ITV News Central: Weather.

6.45 ITV News and Weather 7.00 Emmerdale Robbie becomes suspicious of Charity and Declan at the hospital, so she returns to Home Farm planning to delete the CCTV footage, but what she views gives her food for thought.

7.30 Coronation Street Hayley waits nervously for the results of her scan, Nick admits to causing Leanne's black eye, and Maddie owns up to the theft of Sally's handbag.

8.00 You've Been Framed! Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, featuring everything from cute kids and crazy animals to pranks and painful-looking accidents. (R)

8.30 Coronation Street Hayley breaks down and lashes out at Roy, David is concerned when a despondent Kylie returns to No 8, and Nick makes a decision that has repercussions for Leanne.

9.00 Vicious A festive edition of the comedy starring Ian McKellen and Derek Jacobi. Freddie and Stuart invite friends round for a Christmas Day celebration at their flat.

9.35 Bridget Jones's Diary (2001) A woman begins a new year by resolving to find love and give up her bad habits. Romantic comedy based on Helen Fielding's novel, with Renee Zellweger, Hugh Grant and Colin Firth. ★★

11.20 ITV News at Ten and Weather: Weather.

11.35 The Cube A childminder and a Londoner take up the challenge, aiming to complete tasks within the confines of the cube to win a jackpot of £250,000. Hosted by Phillip Schofield. (R)

12.25 Jackpot247 Interactive gaming. **3.00 FILM: The Majestic (2001)** Drama, starring Jim Carrey. ★★ **5.30 ITV Nightscreen**

3.15 Deal or No Deal: Ideal Christmas Noel Edmonds hosts a festive-themed edition.

4.15 Come Dine with Me Christmas Special With Jona Lewie, Maizie Williams, Viv Brown and Toby Anstis. (R)

5.20 The Simpsons Homer reminisces about the time he was in a band. (R)

5.50 Hollyoaks Freddie tries to save a loved one from the village's most dangerous residents.

6.20 Hollyoaks Freddie races to save a loved one from a grisly fate.

6.50 Channel 4 News 7.00 4thought.tv How Christmas is perceived by those who do not celebrate it.

7.05 Gordon Ramsay's Home Cooking With the help of his children, the chef prepares some of his favourite hot and spicy festive recipes, including Mexican eggs, noodle soup and aromatic whole crispy roast duck.

8.00 Celebrity Come Dine with Me Actress Dannella Westbrook, choreographer Louie Spence, 1980s pop star Sinitta and Hugo Taylor from Made in Chelsea get into the party spirit in a festive celebrity special.

9.00 The Inbetweeners Movie (2011) Awkward teenagers Simon, Will, Jay and Neil head to Greece for a wild holiday – but things do not go to plan. Comedy, with Joe Thomas, Simon Bird, James Buckley and Blake Harrison. ★★

10.55 Queer as Pop: From the Gay Scene to the Mainstream Documentary revealing how the social and political liberation of gay men has inspired and influenced the music mainstream over the past 40 years.

11.55 Chic: iTunes Festival Special Lauren Laverne introduces footage from the group's performance at the music event at London's Roundhouse.

12.55 Kylie Minogue: Showgirl - Live at Earl's Court 1.55 FILM: The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975) ★★ 3.35 90210 4.15 A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun (R) 5.10 SuperScrimpers 5.20 Deal or No Deal (R)

4.10 Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (1968) Children's musical adventure, starring Dick Van Dyke. ★★

7.00 Eddie Stobart's Christmas Delivery Festive edition of the documentary, in which the company's truckers battle winter conditions to ensure shops and councils receive their supply of Christmas trees and salt. (R) **5 News Update**

8.00 World's Strongest Man 2013 James Richardson presents the second heat from Haitang Bay in Sanya, China, featuring six competitors looking to finish in the top two and make it through to the final. **5 News at 9**

9.00 Merry Christmas Mr Bean The hapless hero plans the Christmas holiday of a lifetime – but fate intervenes and pulls the rug out from under his feet, reducing what should have been the perfect festive season to a frantic comedy of errors. Slapstick, starring Rowan Atkinson. Part of Slapstick Comedy Night. (R)

9.30 Do It Yourself Mr Bean The hapless hero's party falls flat, but he finds an ingenious way to beat the sales queues and bag a bargain. Slapstick comedy, starring Rowan Atkinson. Part of Slapstick Comedy Night. (R)

10.00 Tommy Cooper's Christmas A seasonal special from 1973, featuring comedy sketches, magic and guest appearances by Sacha Distel and Clodagh Rodgers, who perform a medley of festive favourites. Part of Slapstick Comedy Night. (R)

11.05 The Plank (1967) Two clumsy workmen carry a plank to a building site, causing various mishaps and accidents along the way. Slapstick comedy, directed by and starring Eric Sykes. With Tommy Cooper. Part of Slapstick Comedy Night. ★★

12.15 SuperCasino 3.05 Blackpool Lights 3.50 Motorsport Mundial 4.20 House Doctor (R) 4.45 Great Artists (R) 5.10 Nick's Quest (R) 5.35 Wildlife SOS (R)

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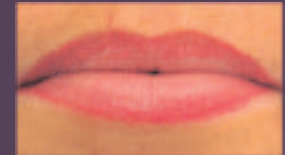
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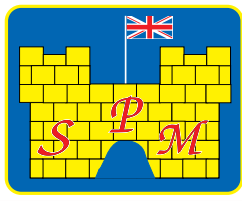
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KINGSWINFORD PARK STREET FOR SALE £159,995 Mid Terrace Period Property, Comprising of: Separate Lounge & Dining Room, Kitchen leading to diner, Conservatory, Two Bedrooms, Refitted Bathroom, Double Glazed and Gas Centrally Heated, Log Burners to Both Reception Rooms.	DUDLEY GREYSTONE PASSAGE FOR SALE £249,995 Large Unusual Detached Property in Central Dudley, Hall, Large Lounge, Dining Kitchen, Utility, WC, Three Good Size Bedrooms, Family Bathroom with Separate Toilet, Two Lofts, Two Garages, Off Road Parking, Lawned Rear Garden and Patio.	WOMBOURNE REYNOLDS CLOSE FOR SALE £325,000 Detached Property, Entrance Hall & Cloakroom, Lounge, Kitchen, Dining Room, Conservatory, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Front & Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking, Garage/Workshop, Gas Central Heating and Partial Double Glazing.	KINGSWINFORD BEECH ROAD FOR SALE £74,950 First Floor Flat in Central Kingswinford. Offered with No Upward Chain. Accommodation Comprises of: Lounge, Kitchen, One Bedroom, Bathroom with Shower, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Front Garden.
SEDGLEY KINGS ROAD £550 pcm* Mid Terrace Property, Two Reception Rooms, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Rear Garden, Unfurnished.	KINGSWINFORD TIVERTON CLOSE £625 pcm* Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Mostly Double Glazed, Front & Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking, Unfurnished, Available Immediately.	LODGE LANE KINGSWINFORD £975 pcm* Luxury Detached Property, Entrance Hall, Cloakroom, Two/Three Reception Rooms, Utility Room, Four/Five Bedrooms, EnSuite, Family Bathroom, Double Garage, Gas Central Heating, Drive, Front & Rear Gardens.	KINGSWINFORD KEYES DRIVE £425 pcm* First Floor Flat, Lounge, Kitchen, One Bedroom, Bathroom, Electric Heating, Unfurnished.
SEDGLEY LONG MEADOW DRIVE £725 pcm* Link Detached, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Utility Room, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Front & Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking, Garage.	BRIERLEY HILL DELPH ROAD £695 pcm* Detached Property, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, WC, Four Bedrooms, Two Bathrooms, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Off Road Parking, Front & Rear Gardens.	PENSNETT PRIMROSE GARDENS £595 pcm* End Terrace Property, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Cloakroom, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Unfurnished.	BRIERLEY HILL FOXDALE DRIVE £470 pcm* Cluster Style Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, • Off Road Parking, Double Glazing, Unfurnished.
WORDSWLEY INGATESTONE DRIVE £510 pcm* Purpose Built Flat, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Unfurnished, Gas Central Heating, Off Road Parking, Communal Grounds.	GORNAL BARR STREET £510 pcm* End Terrace Property, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Rear Garden, Unfurnished, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating.	ROWLEY REGIS TITFORD LANE £360 pcm* Ground Floor Flat, Lounge, Kitchen, One Bedroom, Bathroom, Allocated Parking, Unfurnished.	BRIERLEY HILL WILLIAM STREET £550 pcm* Terraced House, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, • Double Glazing, Unfurnished.
KINGSWINFORD LARCH ROAD £375 pcm* First Floor Flat, Lounge/Diner, Kitchen, One Double Bedroom, Bathroom, Electric Heating, Unfurnished.	GORNAL EVE LANE £620 pcm* Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Unfurnished, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Front & Rear Gardens, Garage.	KINGSWINFORD GREENFIELDS ROAD £425 pcm* Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Dining Room, Conservatory, Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Unfurnished.	KINGSWINFORD BEECH ROAD £550 pcm* First Floor Flat, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Newly Decorated, New Flooring, Available Immediately.
STOURBRIDGE LICKEY ROAD £675 pcm* Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Conservatory, Study, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Unfurnished.	HALESOWEN CLIFTON ROAD £595 pcm* Semi-Detached House, Lounge/Diner, Kitchen, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom with shower, Gas Central Heating, Front & Rear Garden, Garage, Unfurnished.	DUDLEY BOURNE STREET £395 pcm* Ground Floor Maisonette, Lounge, Kitchen, One Bedroom, Bathroom, Electric Heating, Double Glazing, Unfurnished.	BRIERLEY HILL DADFORD VIEW £425 pcm* Cluster Style Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Off Road Parking, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating.

(*Administration/application fees will apply)

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Property

Countryside views from three-bedroom mid-terraced house

THIS beautifully appointed and tastefully decorated three-bedroomed mid terrace home of style and character in Turl's Hill Road, Coseley, lies in a stunning location overlooking countryside.

It is for sale through Roden Boydell Estate Agents priced £154,950.

With some double glazing and gas central heating, accommodation includes a lounge, dining room, superb fitted kitchen, an inner hallway with a cloaks cupboard, cellarette, rear porch, three bedrooms, an office, bathroom and a delightful rear garden.

Cellaret

In more detail the lounge has an attractive fireplace and laminate flooring, as does the dining room which also leads to the cellaret.

The kitchen has space for a range style oven, integrated freezer and a door leads off to the bathroom.

Here there is a white suite with bath, shower cubicle, WC and a wash hand basin.

The front garden has a gravel driveway while the rear includes a patio, lawned area and a sun terrace.

For further information contact Roden Boydell on 01902 881188 or visit the website at www.rodenboydell.com



Above, the three-bedroomed mid-terraced home on Turl's Hill Road in Coseley and, below, the terrace as seen from facing fields



Tis the season to think about security at home

DURING the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping, festive activities and frequent visitors home security can be at the bottom of the list.

Sadly, burglaries increase by up to 20 per cent over the winter months. There are some simple hints which could help you have a peaceful and secure Christmas.

Who's at the door?: If you have one look through your front door spy hole and keep the door chain on before opening the door.

Only release the chain if you are satisfied the person at the door is really who they say they are.

Yale's recording digital door viewer has a built in camera to take pictures of anyone at the door.

Raise the alarm: Make sure your home is protected should you go away over Christmas.

Guard

Home alarms act as the perfect security guard, watching over your property while you're not there.

Alarms also act as visual deterrents to potential burglars and are vital for alerting neighbours in the event of a break-in.

The latest gadgets, laptops and expensive jewellery provides thieves with the perfect incentive to burgle.

Make sure all doors and windows are fitted with secure locks in line with British standards. External



Don't make it easy for burglars to see and find where your presents are

timber doors should be secured using a mortice lock and/or nightlatch and if you have a PVCu or composite door then it is a good idea to upgrade the euro profile cylinder in your multi-point lock.

The great outdoors: Outdoor thefts are almost 20 per cent higher compared with five years ago and at this time of year sheds are often used to store Christmas presents such as bicycles and power tools.

You can secure your out-buildings with a weather-proof padlock to help deter would-be thieves. Anchor locks and cables can also be used to secure high value

individual items inside an outbuilding. **Christmas party safety:** It's easy to let your hair down and enjoy your Christmas party if you follow a few golden rules.

Plan your journey home and use a reputable taxi company.

If you're left in a position where you are on your own try to stick to well lit areas and carry a personal attack alarm for peace of mind.

Don't advertise your presents: Be careful to dispose of gift packaging carefully.

Rubbish collections over the Christmas and New Year period are often at different times, so remember to take

note of any changes. Make sure you put your rubbish out just before the collection and shred any details you wouldn't want people to see.

You should also resist the urge to advertise your new Christmas gifts to everyone on Facebook.

You don't want to create a catalogue for burglars to choose from – especially if you tag yourself at an airport three days later.

By following these simple tips you can help protect your belongings, homes and families over the festive period, ensuring everyone has a very merry – and safe – Christmas. The tips and information is courtesy of Yale.

TOWN & COUNTRY

PROPERTY SERVICES



IBIS GARDENS KINGSWINFORD

An extremely well presented four bedroom detached property in this much sought after residential location. The accommodation comprises of entrance hall, WC, lounge, dining room, conservatory, fitted kitchen and play room. Master bedroom with en-suite, further 3 bedrooms and house bathroom. The property further benefits from having gas central heating, rear garden, block paved driveway affording off road parking and garage. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING =: D DSS:NO CHILDREN:YES PETS:NO SMOKERS:NO

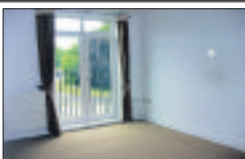
£845PCM- DEPOSIT £945 + FEES



STEWPLY COURT STEWPONY

An extremely well presented two bedroom first floor apartment situated in a popular residential location, the accommodation comprises of entrance hall, lounge fitted kitchen, master bedroom with en-suite and second bedroom, the property benefits from gas central heating, double glazing and allocated parking. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = B DSS: NO CHILDREN: NO PETS: NO SMOKERS: NO

£600PCM - DEPOSIT £700 + FEES



COLUMBUS AVENUE MERRY HILL

A prestigious two bedroom furnished ground floor apartment located on the popular Merry Hill Complex. Accommodation comprises of: Entrance Hall, Lounge/Dining Area, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms - Master with En Suite. The property further benefits from double glazing and central heating. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = C DSS: NO PETS:NO CHILDREN: YES SMOKERS: NO

£575PCM - Deposit £675 + FEES



TREFOIL GARDENS AMBLECOTE

An extremely well presented two bedroom apartment (based on the third floor) situated on this popular residential development and close to Stourbridge Town Centre and Bus Networks. The accommodation comprises of entrance hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom and two bedrooms. The property further benefits from gas central heating, double glazing and allocated parking. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = B DSS:NO PETS:NO CHILDREN:NO SMOKERS:NO

£575PCM DEPOSIT £863 + FEES



PLATTS CRESCENT AMBLECOTE

A well presented Three Bedroom Family Home situated in a Popular Residential Location with accommodation comprising of: Lounge, Kitchen, Dining Room, three Bedrooms and family Bathroom. The property further benefits from having gas central heating and rear garden. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = E CHILDREN: YES DSS: MAY CONSIDER. Pets: MAY CONSIDER. Smokers: NO ONE MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE

£570PCM- DEPOSIT £670 + FEES



HOLBORN HOUSE SEDGLEY

A very well presented two bedroom apartment in a modern development. Accommodation comprises lounge, kitchen, two bedrooms and bath/shower room. The property further benefits from having secure parking at the rear of the property. UNFURNISHED DSS: NO CHILDREN: NO PETS: NO SMOKERS: NO EPC RATING = B

£550PCM DEPOSIT £650 + FEES



OVERMAN CLOSE LYE

A superb modern end mews property situated in a small cul-de-sac location with accommodation to comprise: kitchen, downstairs WC, lounge with staircase to two bedrooms and bathroom. The property further benefits from central heating, double glazing, lawned foregarden with off road parking to the side and enclosed rear garden laid to lawn. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = C DSS: NO PETS:NO CHILDREN:YES SMOKERS:NO

£530PCM- DEPOSIT £630 + FEES



THE QUARTER CLARENCE

A well presented two bedroom terrace property situated in a popular residential location. Accommodation comprises of lounge, kitchen, two bedrooms and bathroom. The property further benefits from gas central heating, double glazing, enclosed lawned rear garden and allocated parking. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = B DSS:MAY CONSIDER CHILDREN:YES PETS:NO SMOKERS:NO

£525PCM DEPOSIT £625 + FEES



CLARENCE STREET SEDGLEY

An extremely well presented two bedroom terrace property situated in a popular residential location. Accommodation comprises of lounge, kitchen, two bedrooms and bathroom. The property further benefits from gas central heating, double glazing and allocated parking. UNFURNISHED EPC RATINGS: C DSS:MAY CONSIDER CHILDREN:YES PETS:NO SMOKERS:NO

£525PCM- DEPOSIT £625 + FEES



LIDDIARD COURT WOLLASTON

A beautifully presented two bedroom second floor over 60's apartment situated in a popular residential location with accommodation to comprise of: Communal entrance, communal lounge, entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, two bedrooms and bathroom. The property further benefits from having double glazing, storage heating, communal gardens and allocated parking. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = C PETS: No CHILDREN: No DSS: No SMOKERS: No

£525PCM- DEPOSIT £625 + FEES



CLARENCE STREET UPPER

An extremely well presented two bedroom terrace property situated in a popular residential location. Accommodation comprises of Entrance hall, downstairs WC, Open plan lounge with kitchen area. Two bedrooms and bathroom. The property further benefits from double glazing and gas central heating. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = B DSS: MAY CONSIDER CHILDREN:YES PETS:NO SMOKERS:NO

£525PCM- DEPOSIT £625 + FEES



HOLLY ROAD ROWLEY REGIS

A Two Bedroom End Terrace Victorian property situated in a popular location. Accommodation comprises of Lounge, breakfast kitchen, two bedrooms and bathroom. The property further benefits from having gas fired central heating, double glazing and a rear garden. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING: E DSS:NO PETS:NO SMOKERS:NO CHILDREN:YES

£495PCM- DEPOSIT £595 + FEES



ALBERT STREET LYE

A well presented three bedroom mid terrace property situated in a popular residential location with accommodation to comprise of: Lounge, inner hall, dining room, fitted kitchen, utility, three bedrooms and bathroom. The property further boasts gas central heating, double glazing, rear garden with patio area and lawn and shared entry to the front. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = E DSS: NO CHILDREN: YES PETS: MAY CONSIDER SMOKERS: NO

£495PCM DEPOSIT £595 + FEES



ALBERT STREET LYE

A well presented and totally refurbished three bedroom mid terrace property in popular residential location, to comprise: Lounge, breakfast kitchen, rear lobby and bathroom, two bedrooms on first floor and third bedroom in attic. The property also benefits from gas central heating, double glazing and rear yard. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING: D 12 month tenancy DSS: MAY CHILDREN: YES PETS: NO SMOKERS: NO

£425PCM DEPOSIT £525 + FEES



KNOYLE COURT SCOTTS ROAD

A one bedroom, second floor apartment offering a convenient location within walking distance of Stourbridge Town Centre and accommodation to comprise: reception hall, lounge, double bedroom kitchen and bathroom. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = G DSS:NO PETS:NO SMOKERS:NO CHILDREN:NO

£400pcm -Deposit £500 + FEES



DADFORD VIEW BRIERLEY HILL

An attractive modern starter home situated in a popular residential location with accommodation to comprise of: Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, two Bedrooms and Shower Room. The property also benefits from sealed unit Double Glazing, small fore Garden and allocated parking. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = E DSS: NO SMOKERS: NO PETS: NO CHILDREN: YES

£400PCM- DEPOSIT £500 + FEES



KINGSWAY WOLLASTON

A well presented two bedroom large first floor flat situated close to all local amenities with accommodation to comprise: Reception hall, lounge, two bedrooms and bathroom. The property further benefits from double glazing and gas central heating. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = E DSS: NO PETS:NO CHILDREN:YES SMOKERS:NO

£395PCM - DEPOSIT £495 + FEES



FOXDALE DRIVE BRIERLEY HILL

A well presented two bedroom first floor Apartment situated in this popular development with accommodation to comprise of: Communal entrance hall, private entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, two bedrooms and bathroom. The property further boasts double glazing, electric heating and allocated parking. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = E DSS: NO CHILDREN: MAY PETS: NO SMOKERS: NO

£395PCM - DEPOSIT £495 + FEES



LOWER HIGH STREET

A well presented one bedroom second floor apartment situated in the heart of Stourbridge Town Centre with accommodation to comprise of: External staircase at the rear of the property to the second floor, entrance hall, lounge/kitchen, bedroom and en-suite shower room. The property further benefits from having Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = D DSS: NO CHILDREN: NO PETS: NO SMOKERS: NO

£395PCM- DEPOSIT £495 + FEES



BLAENWERN DRIVE

A spacious two bedroom first floor apartment situated in a popular residential location with accommodation to comprise of: Entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, two bedrooms and bathroom. The property also benefits from having storage heating, double glazing, communal gardens and en-bloc garage. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = E DSS: NO CHILDREN: YES PETS: NO SMOKERS: NO

£395PCM DEPOSIT £495 + FEES

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HIGH STREET WORDSLEY

A well presented one bedroom first floor apartment with accommodation to comprise of: Private entrance, open plan Lounge/Kitchen being fully carpeted and with oven and hob. Bedroom with built in storage and Bathroom with shower. The property further benefits from double glazing and electric heating. There is allocated parking to the rear of the property. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = G DSS:YES PETS:NO CHILDREN:NO SMOKERS:NO

£375PCM DEPOSIT £475 + FEES



AVERN CLOSE TIPTON

An extremely well presented one bedroom ground floor flat, situated in a popular residential location. Accommodation comprises of entrance hall, lounge, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom. The property further benefits from electric heating and double glazing, communal garden and allocated parking. UNFURNISHED EPC RATING = G DSS: NO CHILDREN: NO SMOKERS: NO

£370PCM DEPOSIT £470 + FEES

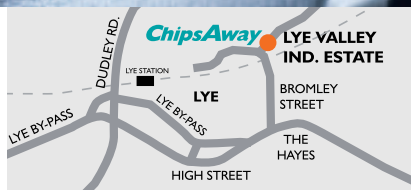
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Motoring



The new 308 is lighter than the old model with better performance and many more features inside

Peugeot 308 aiming to be the very best in its class

WHEN a manufacturer boldly says its new car will be the best in class you know it means business – and that's just the claim from Peugeot about the new 308.

The 308 arrives in January and will be the first model in the company's history to retain the name of its predecessor, despite being a completely new car from the ground up.

And any Peugeot driver will be delighted to learn that at last the pedals have been centred. So no longer are you sat with your feet to the right. Apparently all that was needed was a redesigned air-conditioning system – why has it taken so long?

Engineers started with a blank sheet of paper and produced a 308 which is

140kg lighter than the old model and that means better performance and efficiency all round.

Such was the attention to detail that laser welding techniques were adopted to minimise weight levels.

While the 308 is attractive enough it won't see people breaking their necks for a glance as it passes by, but it's hard not to be really taken by the cabin, which gets a futuristic approach.

There's an attractive small steering wheel that you look over, instead of through, to see the clocks.

Star place goes to the centrally mounted touch-screen which is standard on all but the entry-level trim, and features large easy-to-hit icons. It's a great piece of kit and the kids will love it. The downside is unless you are at home with this type of technology

there's a lot to understand and take in.

Every action, including the heating and air con system, has to come via the touch screen and you may find yourself spending a little too much time with your eyes off the road ahead.

Top of the range models benefit from a heads-up image in front of the driver which not only tells you what speed you are travelling but also gives sat-nav instructions.

On the road there's not a lot wrong, with good handling and a comfortable ride, even when pushed to the limit.

The 114bhp 1.6 diesel manual with stop-start is the pick of the range with good gear flexibility and a much quieter ride than petrol options. Though it's worth remembering it was a top of the range Feline e-HDi version.

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Women seeking men

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HI I'm Jo, first timer, newly divorced perfect size 10, blonde, attractive, tactile and looking to fall in love again. Age unimportant, dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409089

SUSIE 32yr old nurse who likes cosy nights in with a good bottle of wine and spending quality times with great company, if you feel the same pls get in touch. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408877

BABS 27yrs slender with dark haired passionate Italian who loves to dance, eat out, looking for nice n/s male to spend quality adult time with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407943

BUBBLY 60 plus lady slim, fair hair, comfy in jeans and leather jacket, seeks similar male for friendship etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408859

JOANNA 34, in need of tlc, winning, dining being treated like the princess I am looking for sugar daddy, that someone special to love me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408869

MARIA gorgeous outgoing bbw 27, good fun, caring, romantic, looking for that special someone to share life with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408733

KIM attractive single lady new to area looking for meet new friends and maybe a new love interest. I have many hobbies and am interesting to know, pls call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408489

TAYLOR attractive very busty curvy black female looking for fun times with open-minded male who is also looking for fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408311

48YR old attractive female seeking local fun maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403947

TRACY slim dark haired beauty, petite, hardworking career, enjoys dancing, nights out, WLTm loving male who can make me laugh for an adult relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409419

SHARON very attractive British black lady, sexy size 6 looking for white male to fall in love with. Beautiful people can be lonely too. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409263

SAM, 35yrs, own business, sexy, loves dressing up and married, seeks discreet man for casual meetings. Can travel anywhere. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box No: 408297

MID naughty flirtatious female looking fun, thrills and disreets meets, give me a call, you won't be disappointed. Any age with open accommodation. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408109

ANITA very attractive black female, seeking mature white/Asian man to enjoy uncomplicated relationship with no ties. Any age, pls contact me, I'm very lonely. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408505

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. Tel No: 0905 002 1952 Box No: 366019

ABBA girl blonde lookalike, size 16, attractive, bubbly, OHAC, seeking solo, refined, handsome guy with full head of hair, 5ft 9ins plus, professional and fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409151

NEETA blonde beauty, classy, intelligent 21yrs, loves to enjoy life, have lots of fun and be spoilt, give me a call. Any age, looks and status. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409101

SUSIE, seeks fifty shades of grey with guy any age but must be discreet, call and I will explain why. Tel No: 0905 002 1953 Box No: 407321

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68YR old lady, likes gardening, meals out, days out, looking for sincere gent to share time with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408413

JENNY single independent attractive lady, tall and leggy, sensual and looking for very special male friend. Only genuine callers pls. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408285

CHRIS blue eyed blonde single female, lots of interests, loves travel, beach, nights out, looking for mature sincere gent for possible ltr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407615

ATTRACTIVE female, young 49, 5ft 7ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, genuine, loyal, easygoing, GSOH, seeks tall, handsome male, 40-50 for fun times, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406135

BETHANY 25yr old blonde, slim size 10 with great personality, looking for nice guy to share my life with, single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408253

HI I'm Pam, cuddly, attractive, self-sufficient, employed, looking for similar young looking, sincere male for hopeful ltr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407933

FEMALE many interests, seeks male, 40-55 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408537

28YR old female, seeking male with GSOH for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408639

MIXED raced lady, 34, widely travelled, seeking gent, 30-40 for romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408429

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CURVY Irish female 35yrs looking for fun, frolics, weekends away and lots of excitement with reliable male, discretion assured. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407603

SLIM active lady, 60's, N/S, seeks honest, kind gent, 57-62 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407693

ANNABELLA board attractive 30 something nurse wanting healing hands for no strings fun. No TLC required. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407449

JANE attractive, seeking male for fun and friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403807

LITTLE bit nice and definitely a little bit naughty! Imaginative curvy blonde seeks male for kisses and cuddles. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 363428

62YR old female, widowed, smart, slim, attractive, kind, outgoing, likes meals out, dancing, holidays, nights in, seeking professional gent. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394106

CAROL 36, looking for older experienced gent 50-70yrs for fun times only, discretion assured and expected. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401853

SUE attractive lonely brunette who loves eyes in/out, music, WLTm someone sincere to love and get close to, why not give me a call? Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407021

LYN slim size 10, 5ft 9ins, attractive with GSOH, OHAC, employed, WLTm genuine guy who is also looking to put some fun back into life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407195

DEBS 37yr old professional, outgoing, bubbly, seeking genuine man for good times in/out and just see where it leads. Single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407039

BLONDE blue eyed 72yr old widow, GSOH, young at heart, seeks honest, caring gent of similar age for holidays, weekends away and happy times, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407113

WHERE have all the genuine men gone? Sue single female who enjoys nights in/out, music, seeks sincere male to enjoy good times and get close to. Pls ring. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407025

PAULA 38 single mum with OHAC, attractive blue eyes, size 14, seeking well built male with GSOH and honest/reliable disposition, looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407029

MEDIUM build female, 66, widow, 5ft 5ins, likes walks, reading, holidays, seeks sincere male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407003

HI I am Linda a lonely petite mature lady looking for nice caring male up to 55yrs who also has lots of love to give for hopeful relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406715

ANITA petite 37yr old tanned, toned sexy size 10 female with very high drive and lots of energy looking for similar man for adult no strings fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406835

CARING female, likes Indian rock music, concerts, cinema, seeks North Staffs male, 40-55 for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406757

LINDA bored housewife wanting to spice things up a bit looking for clean, well mannered professional for discreet adult meets. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406705

GOOD looking professional female, 51, enjoys arts, winning/dining, sight seeing, country walks, seeks special male to enjoy great fun with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406765

LIZ 42, black, divorced, seeking male, 44-54 for kind, sincere, honest, open relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400949

SUE 40's female who enjoys evenings in/out looking for someone to have some fun and hopefully get close to, go on, give me a ring. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407019

NICKY loving caring gorgeous fun young lady who loves swimming, dancing and lots more, seeking male for text chats and fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407459

BLACK female, 45, seeking older gent, 60 plus who knows how to look after a lady. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407787

PAM 71, feels younger, lots to give, socialising, theatre, country walks, charity work, seeking male to share interests with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407851

LOVING caring young 67yr old female 5ft 2ins, slim size 12, brown hair, likes meals out, GSOH, smoker, seeks slim, smart male with GSOH, 58-62. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 364651

MANDY divorced independent 46yr old single mum, confident, bubbly and social, looking for male companion to share good times and to be there for each other. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407469

NICKY 26 fun single female who has been on her own far too long desperately seeking her Prince Charming, must be tall and possess the ability to fall in love. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407485

MICHELLE lonely singleton, fit/slender, pacemaker, easygoing seeks male to go out and generally spoil rotten in exchange for great companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407501

HEATHER larger than life, cuddly built lady, scrubs up pretty well, employed, OHAC, GSOH, looking for good times with willing male, fun times guaranteed. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407307

TRACY 35yr old blonde petite single mum, WLTm tall male for nights out, text chats and hopefully ltr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407215

SHELLEY 48, 5ft 5ins, brunette, seeking discreet relationship with male 48-52 for friendship/companionship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405795

CHRISTINA 38 very pretty petite trainee nurse looking for N/S male companionship to enjoy meals/drinks out, leading to more maybe. Age/looks and status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405243

DONNA 42yrs young separated female who is ready to start dating again, bubbly, attractive, blonde and raring to get going, come on don't keep me waiting! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406341

SINGLE cuddly female, 5ft 6ins, green eyes, seeks male, 40-50 for fun and more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406015

PAT 67, attractive, likes reading, holidays, seeking female, 65-72 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405985

RETIREED lady, seeks gent for friendship and outings, holidays etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392936

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SENSUAL cuddly 32yr old professional looking for similar minded discreet male up to 40yrs for 1-2-1 fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404023

BLONDE attractive educated lady 50, young minded, seeks professional tall male, 45-55 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391818

TINA fun loving single mum who enjoys most things in life, seeking happy guy with GSOH for meals in, dates out, possible romance and adult companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403567

CARLA 41, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 2ins, loving, seeking male who likes walks, cinema and romantic meals. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396127

ATTRACTIVE lady, GSOH, slim, dark hair, 50's, likes walks, films, art, meals out, seeks male with GSOH and similar interests for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399245

BLONDE tanned female, trendy, 46, GSOH, likes walks, pubs, nights in, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 384852

GAIL 52, blonde hair, 5ft 2ins, likes nights out, seeks N/S male, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 402041

JANE 48yrs West Midlands, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, looking for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403949

BLACK female 32yrs, 38dd, very curvy, sensual and looking for discreet fun with no strings or complications, any age, looks or status. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405269

MARIA petite curvy brunette, into keep fit, running, beauty, looking for nice genuine tall N/S guy with no ties for fun adult companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405099

SHAZ 33 easygoing voluptuous black female with lovely smile and personality to match, loves music, keeping fit and looking good, WLTm appreciative guy. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404819

WOMAN 55yrs old, N/S, size 14, likes animals, nature, reading, TV, quiet life, seeks man 45-55, N/S for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404447

WIDOW young hearted 70's, N/S, likes reading, concerts, gardening, meals out, WLTm younger gentleman with similar interests. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404177

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Victory for swimmers in the last of rounds

National League Round 3 SWIMMERS from Halesowen Swimming Club travelled to Worcester for the final round of the West Midlands National League Premier Division.

The swimmers were looking to return to winning ways and after the opening relay events had opened up a five point gap to the other teams.

The gala was never going to be easy and at the halfway point Halesowen were still in contention but five points behind first spot but, after a strong run of results, the team were back in the lead by 10 points with just the final relays to go.

The swimmers ran out winners overall by 11 points to finish 2013 in fine style.

Stars of the show were double event winners Kate Morrice in the butterfly and freestyle; James Cuthbert in the breaststroke and butterfly and Richard Spoor in the breaststroke and individual medley.

Other individual winners were Chloe Finch and Josh Bradley in the freestyle and Mark Laing in the breaststroke.

The age 13 and under boys team including Jakob Baker, Jamie Greenwood and Jack Simpson won the medley relay and the open mens team including Zach Collins, Jacob Darby, Michael Edmunds were unbeatable in both freestyle and medley relays.

Halesowen 210, Long Eaton A 199, Worcester 195, Bilston 186, City of Hereford 156, Calverton & Bingham 101.

Kennett for Brummies

BIRMINGHAM have snapped up Great Britain international Edward Kennett for the 2014 season.

Kennett, who says Perry Barr is one of his favourite tracks, spent last season with Swindon but a lack of regular racing affected his form.

Now he's hoping a switch to the Selco Brummies will give his career a boost and he will double-up with Premier League Rye House.

He wants to help his new club reach the play-offs for a third successive season.

He said: "Birmingham did really well last year finishing top of the league, and it would be nice if we can have another good season."

It's a high five for Hales' ladies side



Sophie Richards

Halesowen Ladies 5 Wednesfield 0

The Yeltz Ladies squad faced Wednesfield in the county cup and the visitors are three leagues above them in the Regional Premier.

So Halesowen were expecting a tough game.

However, with stronger opposition, Halesowen always raise their game.

Playing with a strong wind across the pitch Halesowen took the game to the visitors.

With the strong powerful mid-field pairing of Sarah Hamill and

Football

Tracey Haycock the home side were giving nothing away and there was some great work on the wing by Haycock who found Hayley Chatwin unmarked and with a controlled take down placed the ball past the stranded keeper.

Within five minutes the Yeltz were two up with Katie Moore driving the ball into the roof of the net.

Chloe Harris scored a deserved goal late in the half with Sophie Richards showing the visitors

how Halesowen wingers play. Half time came with Halesowen having most of the control of the game.

Second half and Wednesfield with nothing to lose came at the Yeltz side. The tackles were crumpling and it was no place for the faint-hearted.

After a free kick placed in to the visitor's defence the ball was headed out and found Shel Thomas and from 30 yards out she smashed the ball back in to the open goal making it 4-0.

Wednesfield did huff and puff but the outstanding centre backs

of Gemma Moss and Charlotte Byatt of the Yeltz and one of the best in the league kept them at bay.

Goal of the game came late on through Haycock on the volley who scored a perfect goal of which any premiership striker would have been proud.

Manager Scott McKee said, on paper Wednesfield should have won the game, but the ladies were on point in commitment passion and pride, we were the better side from start to finish and deserved to be in the quarter finals.

Saxons exorcise ghost of snow-bound defeat

Bromsgrove 7 Stourbridge Saxons 41
AN error-strewn affair at Finstall Park exorcised the ghost of Bromsgrove's snow-bound victory back in January.

The game produced a bonus point win that keeps the Saxons very much in the four-way race at the top of National 2 North. Wing Nathan Bressington's hat-trick further extended his record to 59 tries in club colours.

An early rash of Bromsgrove tackle and maul infringements were penalised and flanker Dave Hughes was handed a yellow card.

The Saxons pack worked a catch and drive, shunting the depleted defenders over the line for Nigel Mukarati to make the opening score.

Ben Hughes was next to drive over and score.

Mukarati broke right from the base of the scrum and passed to Sione Tu'ipolotu who cut through the defence to score.

Tom Jarvis then sold full-back Ollie Bache an outrageous dummy and waltzed over to score the bonus point try. Hughes returned from the sinbin to galvanise a Bromsgrove side staring at a heavy defeat.

At the same time the Saxons got on the wrong side of Mr Watters and conceded a sequence of six penalties.

Ben Barkley secured the ball and drove through several defenders, it was worked quickly right to Dipple whose long cut-out pass found Dan Thompson.

He executed a simple draw and give to Jarvis, and with the cover struggling to get across Bressington gratefully accepted a scoring pass

Rugby

to touch down in the right corner.

A lineout in the Saxons' 22, gave the hosts a penalty try when Mike Hill's side entry disrupted a driving maul.

The visitors struck back when Bressington again out-paced the defence and scored from just inside his own half. With Saxons a man down due to a yellow card the hosts couldn't make the man advantage pay.

White's return heralded a high-tempo last 10 minutes that saw the penalty flow reversed as the hosts shipped five.

A quick tap deep in Bromsgrove's 22 set up Bressington's third try as White's long floated pass allowed him to canter in at the corner in the dying seconds.

Coach Mike Umaga said: "We started well but seemed to lose our way during the game, we achieved dominance in most areas but got on the wrong side of the referee for much of the time, it was deeply frustrating."



Nathan Bressington with the ball with Nigel Mukarati in support as the Saxons run roughshod over Bromsgrove

Hicklin's double is trouble for the Hawks

Halas Hawks Ladies 1 Stourbridge Ladies 3

STOURBRIDGE made the short trip to Premier League Halas Hawks in the second round of the League Cup.

Despite being two divisions lower than their neighbours, Stourbridge pressed from the off and were unlucky to have a goal ruled offside.

Stourbridge kept up the pressure and were rewarded when a Katie McBain effort was sliced into the goal by a Halas defender.

One up at the break and with the slope in their favour Stourbridge continued the second half in similar style.

Charlie Hicklin doubled the lead with a low shot that beat the keeper at the near post and now Stourbridge were totally in control, reducing Halas to long range efforts.

However, Stourbridge failed to kill the game. The obvious then happened when Stourbridge failed to clear their lines and Halas halved the deficit.

Stourbridge responded with further attacks and the game was settled when Hicklin struck again.

The ladies are now top of the league and have an unbeaten run of 11 games.

Owls look to extend on Johnson

SHEFFIELD Wednesday are trying to extend the loan of Wolves defender Roger Johnson.

Johnson has played 13 games for the Owls since joining them in September, continuing to be a mainstay in the team despite manager Dave Jones losing his job.

Caretaker-boss Stuart Gray is a big admirer of the 30-year-old, who has won three, drawn four and lost six of the games he has been involved in to date.

Gray said he understood Johnson's loan ends on January 2 and the former Wolves coach wants to keep the one-time £4m signing for the rest of the season if he can.

"We're trying to have a bit of dialogue with Wolves and trying to extend his loan but he's not our player," said Gray.

"That will be down to Wolves and you never know what's going to happen in football."

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Saxon mail
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Page 35



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An ill wind blows no good for visitors

**Coventry Sphinx 2
Tipton Town 0**

A BITING gale force westerly wind blew incessantly but Sphinx adapted to the conditions the better of the two sides and it was Tipton who were made to feel the chill.

The home side opened their account with a stunning strike by Ash Wilkes who, with the gale at his back, launched a spectacular volley from near the right touchline to beat Pemberton.

Tipton resumed after the break with the wind at their backs, but their hopes nose-dived when they fell 2-0 down in the 50th minute.

Their defence got pulled out of position and Kiam Gladins drove the ball home.

Thereafter, Connor Gator responded for the visitors with a goalworthy effort turned aside with difficulty by Carl O'Neill.

Lee Wherton excelled in the 71st minute, launching a ball-winning tackle on Wilkes as Sphinx pressed.

Sphinx went desperately close to a third goal seven minutes from time when substitute Aden Moore cut in from the left wing and arrowed his drive only just wide of the visitors' post.

In the final moments Danny Ashton twice went close for Tipton, lobbing just over the top following a corner kick and seconds later firing inches wide.

Warning to the slackers

HARDLINE Kenny Jackett has warned Wolves slackers Bakary Sako and Leigh Griffiths he will not tolerate another display like Saturday's as he declared the battle is on for their places.

The Molineux head coach also insisted he hasn't thought about cashing in on Sako in January and backed the winger to return to form.

Jackett accused his top scorers of a lack of workrate after hauling both off at half-time of the 2-0 defeat by MK Dons.

"Sako and Griffiths have got to respond in the right way," said Jackett.

"They can't put in a first 45 minutes like they did because it wasn't enough."

"They have to work harder because I was disappointed in what they did and they know their standards have to be kept up."

Asked if Sako's place is under threat, Jackett said: "I'll see how he responds."

Loss of identity led to loss of Baggies boss



Steve Clarke - sacked

STEVE CLARKE can call on some high-powered testimonials as to the quality of his work.

Five-star managers, former and current internationals - all have been unanimous about Clarke's abilities, certainly as a coach.

But the axe has fallen in support of one of the game's oldest adages. All teams eventually assume the personality of the man at the helm and under their quiet and undemonstrative head coach, Albion had become anonymous.

Like the names Clarke can put on

Football

his CV, the Baggies have an impressive roster, by easy consent their most impressive of the Premier League era.

But they have become neither one thing nor the other in a year of deepening decline; all the glitter is on paper when it needs to be on the pitch.

After one-and-a-half seasons, it is difficult to know what Clarke's Albion stand for, what their identity is. He certainly never seemed to

settle on a best team. They have an array of attacking weaponry, but struggle to score goals. The stylish, possession-based passing football now comes only in fits and starts.

A defence that was the basis of his predecessor's success, has lost its certainty. Albion don't surrender meekly, but neither do they take games by the scruff of the neck.

In the eyes of supporters, Clarke was a reactive manager, not proactive, a man who seemed to approach games making sure he didn't lose it before he tried to win it.

There have been times in the club's Premier League story when that would have been acceptable - but not when he has such an impressive array of offensive talent at his disposal.

All of this has combined to cost him his place and when the brutality of the moment has passed the 50-year-old Scot with the blue chip contacts book may view his first spell in charge as a missed opportunity.

He wanted to preach caution still when The Hawthorns was primed for greater adventure.

Hales end on top in close call

Newport 23 Old Hales 29

OLD Halesonians travelled to Shropshire for a close fought rugby game that seemed to favour the better prepared home side.

This was to be a hard fought battle with the lead changing several times during the game.

After nine minutes Hales fly half Steve Powell converted a penalty to lead 0-3.

Pressure by the home side was rewarded by Hales giving a penalty to Newport to even things up.

Shortly after Newport again forced another penalty.

Joe Oxford who took on his opposite number in his usual railroad manner for a great try.

Five minutes later Newport were again looking stronger in maul and ruck which resulted in a converted pushover try.

A Newport handling error gave the ball to Hales and Luke Smith sprinted for a try. Newport again came back with a try, converted for a 20 to 17 lead.

Powell then scored for Hales. After 65 minutes Newport got their final points through a penalty.

A driving maul led by Tom Jordan saw him secure a well deserved try which Powell converted.

MK Dons damage Wolves' chances

Wolves 0 MK Dons 2

BACK-TO-BACK defeats without scoring has at least loosened the nuts on Wolves' promotion bandwagon a little, if not seen the wheels come off.

Patrick Bamford's goal on the half hour shattered the flimsy platform Wolves' half-hearted shots had created and Ben Reeves finished the job.

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GLASSBOYS' HOME RUN TAKEN AWAY

Stourbridge 0 Arlesley Town 2

STOURBRIDGE fell to their first home defeat for three months against a strong, athletic and hard-working Arlesley side who once they got their noses in front did a very thorough job.

On a blustery afternoon, Kayelden Brown caused the visitors defence some early problems with his strong running and ungainly stride.

However, it was Arlesley who made the better start overall in a surprisingly open first period.

In the sixth minute Jonny McNamara played the ball through into the run of lively on-loan forward Jo N'Guessan, but as he was closed down quickly by Dean Coleman on the edge of his box, N'Guessan clipped the ball past the far post.

Threaten

N'Guessan was then twice denied by good blocks inside the area as Arlesley continued to threaten the goal.

However, the home side responded in the 11th minute with Haynes threading a pass through into the path of Ryan Rowe, but he fired a low shot into the side-netting and then a minute later Sean Geddes played a measured through pass into Benbow who struck a low left-foot shot from the left-hand side of the box that was saved by Jack Bonham.

The Glassboys best chance of the afternoon came in the 14th minute when a first-time flick by Benbow from a Geddes pass played in Rowe on the right-hand side of the box,

Football

however, he slipped his low angled shot past the far post.

Instead it was the visitors who made the breakthrough on the half-hour with a well worked goal.

James Hatch fed a short pass into N'Guessan who found Barry Hayles before spinning past Haynes to take a return pass and tucking away a low shot past Coleman.

Two minutes into the second-half Arlesley might have doubled their advantage as Hayles pushed the ball through to N'Guessan, who was left one-on-one with Coleman, but he hurried his shot wide.

After that the visitors were generally happy to pack the midfield and soak up the pressure.

The Glassboys were finding it increasingly hard to build up any real momentum. Stourbridge made a double change after 60 minutes, but they still could not conjure up an equalising goal.

Four minutes before time Arlesley made sure of the three points as Martel Powell sent over a cross for McNamara to get in a free header that Coleman blocked, but he could do nothing to prevent Hatch from burying the rebound.



Kayelden Brown of Stourbridge attempts a spectacular cross to the evident anxiety of Arlesley keeper Jack Bonham

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